Democratic Industry

A Practical Study in Social History

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J.

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PREFACE

BASED upon historic facts, the present volume is purely constructive in its nature. It applies the acid test of experience to the great social issues and closes with a definite program of practical social action.

Thoughtful men are daily realizing more fully that the only economic bulwark to safeguard the domestic peace of the nations is the establishment of a true democracy in our industrial life. The task of the writer has been to show how signally the ancient pagan civilizations failed in this regard at the very height of their artistic achievements and national prosperity. With the aid of the Church, labor rose from slavery to serfdom, and from serfdom to democratic industry. These developments are carefully traced and the causes which interrupted this progress explained by the author. Abundant documentary evidence is offered, together with frequent citations gathered from the most impartial and reliable sources.

The last few centuries immediately preceding the World War, viewed from the standpoint of democratic industry, may rightly be called the Dark Ages, in an economic and social sense. This

statement, which might once have been received with incredulous astonishment, is a truism in our day. Within them took place the full growth and unhampered evolution of that unrestricted concentration of wealth which contained, as all can now readily perceive, the seeds of social anarchy. It was not necessary, then, to delay upon these otherwise than to show the nature and reason of their failure.

The aim of society must be to promote the public good, and not a mere deceptive national prosperity absorbed by a privileged few. The author's main purpose, therefore, was to point out the ideal to be followed in a true conception of democratic industry.

From another point of view the argument for the present volume was thus stated years ago by a writer in the London *Month:*

" Whilst a certain amount of negative criticism of Socialism and other theories cannot be dispensed with, most of our attention must be given to the expounding of positive doctrine. Workingmen are much more likely to be impressed by knowing what the Church advocates than by knowing what she condemns. They will grasp all this the more readily and thoroughly if it is placed in its historic setting, if they learn something of what the Church has done in the past for society in general and the working class in particular." [1]

[1] H. Somerville, Jan., 1913.

The book, it is hoped, will serve as a text in social history as well as a volume for popular circulation. False history has been made the basis of false social philosophy. We must first correct these distorted views before we can hope to lead the masses aright towards the attainment of the ideals which all true men will gladly follow.

Of particular importance is the extensive chapter on Modern Industrial Democracy, with its many examples showing the nature and growth of the new democratic movement in industry, and pointing out its rightful development.

DEMOCRATIC INDUSTRY

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CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN LABOR UNIONS

WE can well imagine the existence of labor organizations centuries before the building of the pyramids. The natural longing after fellowship and the advantages of association between members of the same class or craft was almost certain to have exercised its influence, under one form or another, unless hindered by positive restrictions. The first historic references to trade unionism are, however, very vague and shadowy. As a legalized institution it is believed to have taken its origin almost simultaneously in Egypt, Greece and Italy, some six or seven centuries before Christ. The three great leaders mentioned, respectively, as its founders in these different countries are the Egyptian ruler Amasis, the Greek law-giver Solon, and the second legendary king of Rome, Numa Pompilius.

Communities of craftsmen are mentioned in the Old Testament. Such were " the families of them

that wrought fine linen in the House of oaths," such, too, were the potters of King David, or one of his successors, who settled in Netaim and Gedera.[1] But no special reference is made to any developed trade organization. Yet owing to religious influences labor was held in far higher respect among the Jews of the Old Dispensation than among any of the other great Eastern nations of antiquity, whose stupendous monuments were erected at the cost of untold human misery, of blood and stripes and grinding oppression.

In Egypt King Amasis, it is stated, considered the formation of legalized trade unions a necessity for obtaining an accurate knowledge of the number of his subjects and of their means of support. However this may be, we find that in course of time a systematic division of craftsmen into State corporations was established with a thoroughness unsurpassed in the imperial days of Prussia. Each trade had its own appointed chief or its head-men, whose duty it was to maintain the interests of the craft and to represent it before the public authorities. Laborers employed in the same crafts were quartered in the same sections of the city, or at least worked in shops located together along the same streets.

The paternal interest of the Government in the trade of its citizens was in great part to be accounted for by the fact that besides a poll tax

[1] I Paralip. iv: 14, 21, 23.

and a house tax, the laborer was also obliged to pay a trade tax. These levies, it was understood, could be obtained from him only after a vigorous application of the collector's rod. His organization would therefore prove an invaluable aid in directing the Government in its work of wringing from the laborer the hard-earned product of his toil. Doubtless it likewise had its economic advantages for the worker, but they could hardly have been more than to save him at times from bonds, stripes or starvation. The *stelae* of the little town of Abydos still record for us today the names of the labor representatives of all the various trades that flourished along its busy streets millenniums ago, from the head-mason, Didiû, to the master-shoemaker, Kahikhonti.

We are particularly fortunate also in possessing a detailed description of labor conditions in ancient Egypt from the hand of one of its own contemporary poets. A translation of his verses was made into French by the famous Egyptologist G. Maspero,[2] whose researches are applied in the present article. Though depicting in striking and realistic language the misery of labor, the poet's attitude is one of cynicism rather than of profound human sympathy. Like all Egyptians of his class, from the haughty ruler to the snobbish scribe, he had been brought up to despise the manual worker. Yet the different types of artisans are made to

2 "History of Egypt," II, pp. 98–102.

stand out before us in his verse more vividly and with more minute realism of detail than even in the sculptures and paintings of this remarkable race. We behold there the metal worker, his fingers " rugged as the crocodile "; the stonecutter, who knows no rest until his arms drop from weariness, but who is cruelly bound in a cramped, unnatural position should he chance to " remain sitting at sunrise "; the barber who runs from street to street seeking custom, " and when he falls to and eats, it is without sitting down "; the artisan, with his chisel, who labors at timber or metal all the day and " at night works at home by the lamp "; or the mason dragging huge blocks of stone, " ten cubits by six," who is " much and dreadfully exhausted," and when the work is finished returns home, " if he has bread," only to find that his children have been beaten mercilessly in his absence.

With barely the scantiest covering for their poor, wasted bodies, the workers shiver in the wind or swelter in the broiling sun. But their comrades, confined in the workshops, enjoy no better fate. In verses out-moderning the moderns the old Egyptian bard continues his picture of hopeless toil, implying in a mere allusion the whole hidden history of the bitter lot of woman beneath this galling yoke of paganism:

> The weaver within doors is worse off than a woman; squatting, his knees against his chest,

he does not breathe.
If during the day he slackens weaving,
he is bound fast as the lotuses of the lake;
and it is by giving bread to the door-keeper,
that the latter permits him to see the light.

The dyer, his fingers reeking —
and their smell is that of fish-spawn —
toils, his two eyes oppressed with fatigue,
his hand does not stop,
and as he speeds his time in cutting out cloth,
he has a hatred of garments.

The shoemaker is very unfortunate;
he moans ceaselessly,
his health is the health of the spawning fish,
and he gnaws the leather.

The baker makes dough,
subjects the loaves to the fire;
while his head is inside the oven,
his son holds him by the legs;
if he slips from the hands of his son,
he falls there into the flames.

In vain shall we look for any understanding of democracy among the pagan Oriental nations. Least of all may we hope to find it in their conception and treatment of labor.

Yet trade organizations were never more comprehensively developed than under this government absolutism. On the testimony of the Greeks, even professional robbers had their own trade corporations, with duly accredited representatives at police headquarters. Their task was to " discuss the somewhat delicate questions to

which the practice of their trade gave rise," and to fix the ransom to be paid for any stolen article, which then was invariably returned to its owner: an institution equally convenient for police and citizens and the honest and honorable order of Egyptian highwaymen.[3]

We may here advert in passing to similar gilds of even the most disreputable occupations, that existed among the Turks in Bagdad under the early Sultans. Pocket thieves and others of their kith paid a stipulated sum to the police for the unhampered exercise of their trade on certain occasions; but wo to them if they were nevertheless caught in the act! A double penalty was then exacted of them. It is of further interest to know that they belonged to the same general gild as the police officials.[4] While this appeals to our sense of the ludicrous, it may be well to look nearer home. The legalizing of modern profiteering interests, we might gently hint, for instance, is an even worse recognition of organized robbery carried on upon a far larger scale.

Labor organizations have just one lesson to learn from the Egyptian labor gilds or trade unions. It is the danger of undue State intrusion which in modern as in ancient life is bound

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[4] Kosta Nikoloff, "*Das Handwerk und Zunftwesen in Bulgarien während der türkischen Herrschaft,* etc.," pp. 53, 54.

always to end in tyranny. It is very simple for labor to hand over to the State, whether capitalistic or communistic, its hard-gained liberties. But this once accomplished — aside from a passing crisis where liberties are surrendered for a time in the interest of patriotism — it will thereafter be difficult, if not impossible, to regain them. Given the little finger, the State will lay hold on the entire body. There is a reasonable State control and a reasonable State ownership within proper limits. These may be extended as far as the common good requires, but no further. To transfer to the State the entire means of production is for labor to place its head in the lion's mouth. Gracious as the lion may appear, compared with the Egyptian crocodile, the laborer is wise in not entrusting his head to either, but in securing and maintaining his own liberty. Capitalism, enforced communism and general State Socialism alike exclude him from a reasonable personal ownership.

"Away from the servile State!" must be his cry. Whether the means of production, on which his livelihood and liberty depend, are in the hands of a capitalistic régime or a communistic bureaucracy will matter little in the end. There is but one way towards freedom, popular prosperity and democratic industry, and that, as was pointed out at the very conclusion of the World War by the

Catholic Episcopacy in America, lies in bringing about a social reconstruction in which the majority shall attain to a personal ownership and control, wholly or in part, of the means of production. This must be our ultimate aim.

"The majority must somehow become owners, or at least in part, of the instruments of production," was the final word of the Bishops of the United States speaking through the Administrative Committee of their National War Council.[5] The education suggested as necessary to reach this stage was the establishment and management by labor of cooperative productive societies and copartnership arrangements. In the former the workers will themselves own and manage the industries, in the latter they are to have a substantial share in the corporate stock and a reasonable share in the management. "However slow the attainment of these ends, they will have to be reached before we can have a thoroughly efficient system of production." Here, therefore, is the mountain of vision the American Bishops pointed out, where alone industrial peace and social justice can be attained and where popular prosperity shall flourish for all, provided that the code of Sinai is not forgotten nor the charity of Christ. Labor must yield up its desire of a maximum wage for a minimum service and capital must remember that: "The laborer's right to a decent livelihood is the

[5] "Social Reconstruction," Reconstruction Pamphlet No. 1, Jan., 1919.

first moral charge upon industry," preceding all rights of the employer to profits, aside from the latter's own reasonable living. And neither may neglect the interests of the consumer.

CHAPTER II

GREEK AND ROMAN TRADE UNIONS

MORE interesting than strictly historical is the description Plutarch has left us of the origin of the Roman labor gilds, which he attributes to Numa Pompilius.[1] To blend together by common interests the racial factions in the newly founded city of Rome, and so to end the deadly party strifes between the Sabines and the Romans within the same walls, the politic ruler is said to have devised a plan of dividing the citizens into groups according to their arts and crafts.

The distinct craft gilds mentioned by this historian as founded during the reign of Numa are eight in number. A ninth was added into which were gathered all the remaining trades. Departing somewhat from the customary interpretation of the Greek text, we may classify the eight Roman craft gilds as follows: 1. flute players, 2. goldsmiths, 3. builders, 4. dyers, 5. tailors, 6. tanners, 7. coppersmiths, 8. potters. That all these trades existed in a specialized form at this early period, about the seventh century before our era, is seriously to be questioned. Other employ-

[1] Plutarch, "Numa," 17.

ments, moreover, which probably were then of greater importance, are not at all mentioned.

One thing alone is historically certain: that a century before Christ trade unions existed at Rome which in the popular mind dated back to time immemorial. These ancient unions were regarded with special respect by the Romans so that they outlived the laws which proved fatal to other organizations. According to a method sufficiently common at a period when historic criticism was not too exacting, the origin of the labor gilds was naturally ascribed to the rather mythical Numa Pompilius to whom Rome was said to be indebted for other important public institutions. For similar reasons, doubtless, the Roman labor organizations were attributed by Florus to Servius Tullius, the sixth legendary King of Rome.[2]

Of the eight craft gilds enumerated by Plutarch three only are spoken of by various Roman historians as incorporated in the Constitution of Servius Tullius: the builders, the coppersmiths, and the flute-players or horn-blowers. Whatever prominence may for a time have been given to these labor gilds, some centuries before the Christian era, was due to their eminent usefulness to the Romans as a military nation.[3] The members of the remaining gilds not mentioned in connec-

[2] Florus, I, 6, 3.

[3] Etienne Martin Saint-Leon, "*Histoire des Corporations de Métiers*," pp. 3–5.

tion with these laws were evidently classed according to the wealth which they individually possessed, or more probably did not possess. Such was the sole criterion of this Constitution. They soon found their place in the lowest stratum of the social layers and were without political significance. As artisans they were held in utter contempt by the classic pagan world. Such we find is the attitude assumed towards the craftsman throughout the entire range of Roman literature. "The laborers are all engaged in a base occupation," says Cicero, "nor can there be anything honorable to a freeman in a workshop." [4]

Shortly after the period to which tradition ascribed the beginning of the gild system in Rome, Solon (born in 638 B. C.) introduced his sweeping reforms in Greece. They completely changed the conditions of capital and labor at Athens. The poor had there been ground down to such utter destitution and misery that they sold their very sons and daughters, and lastly, even their own bodies into slavery to the masters of bread, in whose hands were the keys of wealth. In this stress of popular despair, which threatened to culminate in a bloody revolution, rich and poor alike chose Solon for their archon. Unlimited power was conferred on him to introduce whatever economic and constitutional reforms might be needed. As a consequence the law which re-

[4] Cicero, "*De Officiis*," I, 42, 150.

duced the laborer to slavery in lieu of the payment of his debt was abrogated. He was given the right to vote, although he could not himself be elected to office, and was ranked in the fourth class of citizens. Slight as such benefits may seem to us, they were regarded as a great boon in their day. A Greek fourth estate had thus been created.

To Solon likewise is ascribed by Gaius the Athenian law, considered as the charter of subsequent trade unions, which permitted the organization of societies, provided they were not hostile to the State. The Roman law engraved upon the Twelve Tables, which granted this same privilege, is regarded by Gaius as only a translation of the Solonic legislation. *Sed haec lex videtur ex lege Solonis translata esse.*[5]

The gilds were in Rome commonly called *collegia,* in Greece *eranoi* and *thiasoi.* Other names were likewise in use, but all these appellations, like the English equivalent, "gild," were applied to societies of almost every variety. While little is known of the statutes of the Greek labor organizations in particular, the constitutions and customs of the gilds in general are perfectly familiar to us. We reproduce a description from a monograph study by H. Tompkins which comprises the salient characteristics of the Greek association.

[5] Gaius, Fourth Book on the Laws of the Twelve Tables. *Digest* XLVII, *Tit.,* 22, "*De Collegiis et Corporibus.*"

It is not, of course, to be presumed that each of the details here given was to be found in every instance.

Let us now consider what these companies were which are called by the name of *eranoi* and *thiasoi,* and of which the inscriptions have revealed the number and importance. They were formed of members who met together to sacrifice to certain divinities and to celebrate their festivals in common; besides this they assisted those members who fell into necessitous circumstances, and provided for their funerals. They were at once religious associations and friendly societies. Sometimes they daringly partook of a political and commercial character. These private corporations, recognized by the State, had their presiding and other officers, their priests, their funds supplied by the contributions of members and the liberality of benefactors. They assembled in their sanctuaries and made decrees. They were found in great numbers in the important cities, and especially in the maritime ones. At Rhodes, for example, they were the Companions of the Sun, the Sons of Bacchus, of Minerva Lindienne, of Jupiter Atagyrius, of Jupiter Soter.[6]

Although the reality was not always as idyllic as this picture represents it, and a statue of a god was usually sufficient to constitute the sanctuary, if we may so call their locals, yet the idea of a perfect Greek gild is here sufficiently expressed. Greater stress might, however, be placed upon the convivial nature of the banquets, which in the latter state of Greek and Roman society may almost have been the principal reason for the existence of such associations, and probably consisted in wild debauches and orgies. Political intrigues,

[6] H. Tompkins, "Friendly Societies of Antiquity."

as we shall see, were frequently a prime motive. How closely the trade gilds approximated to the description here given it is difficult to say, yet they were doubtlessly conformed, as far as possible, to the general gild ideal of their time.

It is to Rome, however, that we must turn for a complete and systematic development of craft and merchant gilds. The inscriptions dealing with them are countless in number and amazing in their variety. Almost every division of trade seemed to possess its union. Tarruntenus Paternus, who was Prefect of the Imperial Guard in 179, enumerates thirty crafts which were especially privileged by the Government. Yet he mentions such trades only as were connected with military works. It is commonly accepted that each of the occupations enumerated, *mensores, medici,* etc., was represented by a union.[7] Constantine in 337 extended special privileges to thirty-five trade corporations.

It is interesting to note that a grouping similar to that of the Middle Ages was likewise observed at Rome, as in Egypt and elsewhere. The potters occupied the Esquiline, the silk-workers and perfumers were settled in Tuscan Street, the oil-dealers and cheese-mongers had their booths in Valabrum, and the silversmiths and tanners were located beyond the Tiber.

[7] Tarruntenus Paternus, *"Liber Primus Militarium." Dig.* L., 6, 7. Liebenam, *"Zur Geschichte und Organisation des Römischen Vereinswesen,"* p. 48.

As in the Middle Ages, so here also streets or sections of the city were often named after the tradesmen and merchants who displayed their wares in them. Thus we have Perfumers' Street, Harness-makers' Street, Corn-venders' Row, and Sandal Street. In the latter Apollo Sandaliarius, or Apollo of the Sandal-makers, had his shrine.

The ancient Roman gilds were, according to general custom, placed under the special guardianship of some divinity. While merchants naturally turned to Mercury, the craftsmen most frequently dedicated their gilds to Minerva, the goddess of the arts. Ovid in particular tells of the many various classes of workingmen and women who assisted in great throngs at the celebration of her feast.[8] The gilds, as we have seen, at times made the temples of a god their meeting places. Thus the merchant gild described by Livy, which met in the temple of Mercury, took for its feast the anniversary of the temple's dedication. The same author writes of a gild of flute-players, who went upon a strike because the censors forbade them to hold their banquets in the temple of Jupiter at Rome, as had been their custom from the earliest times. In great indignation they left the capitol in a body and betook themselves to another city, where they were well received. But when they had celebrated their feast, and were deep under the influence of Bacchus, oblivicus of their

[8] Ovid, "*Fast.*," III, 308 ff., 819–832.

cares and grievances, the citizens cast them together into a cart and so returned them to Rome. There a reconciliation took place.[9] Liebenam refers to other classic authors who have different versions of the same story, but it serves at all events to illustrate existing conditions.

Roman labor gilds were not to mark any final progress towards a more democratic conception whether of industry or politics. The reasons for their absolute and pitiable failure will be made plain in the following chapters.

[9] Livy, IX, 30.

CHAPTER III

POLITICS AND VIOLENCE

NEITHER during the Republic nor during the Empire was it ever the intention of the Roman law to interfere with pure labor unions. But unfortunately the economic purpose of these institutions was too frequently forgotten by the gildsmen themselves and their political influence or physical mob-power was sold to the most unworthy demagogues or venal politicians, in return for immediate bribes, profits or assurances. The proper use of the vote on the part of the laborer to effect some social measures is not here called into question. It is not merely a right, but a duty. It was the false political character which Roman trade unions often assumed, the excesses to which they led and the dangers which they were thought to threaten to the State that brought about their dissolution from time to time. Yet even then the intention of the law was manifested by the fact that the steady ancient craft gilds, which had continued for centuries, were not molested. Thus the historian Suetonius writes of Cæsar that " He destroyed all the gilds except those which had been founded in

ancient times." [1] Again of Augustus he says: "He dissolved the gilds, except such as were of long standing and legalized." [2]

During the disturbed times and amid the hideous immorality of the last days of the Republic, pictured so graphically by Sallust, the gilds mingled largely in the intrigues of political life. Their services were courted, with bribes and promises we may presume, by every politician at election times. Ambitious men used them for their own dark purposes, and even Cicero, with all his disdain of the lower classes and the laborers, is said to have availed himself of their assistance. We can, therefore, understand the reason for such severe measures as the Lex Gabinia, which forbade all secret gatherings of the people, under penalty of death. Such laws were directed not against the gilds, but against political agitators and revolutionists, who cared for them only as stepping-stones to the acquisition of personal power. As W. Warde Fowler writes:

> It is curious to notice, that by the time these old gilds emerge into light again as clubs that could be used for political purposes, a new source of gain, and one that was really sordid, had been placed within the reach of the Roman *plebs urbana;* it was possible to make money by your vote in the election of the magistrate. In that degenerate age, when the vast accumulation of wealth made it possible for a man to purchase his way to power, in spite of repeated attempts to check the

[1] Suetonius, "*Caes.*," 42.
[2] Suetonius, "*Octav.*," 32.

evil by legislation, the old principle of honorable association was used to help the small man to make a living by choosing the unprincipled and often the incompetent to undertake the government of the empire.[3]

Most interesting is the discovery at Pompeii of the electioneering posters of the trade gilds. The wealthy and luxurious city was throbbing with political life on the eve of the great catastrophe, and the labor unions were active in every section to secure the election of their favorite candidates. Signs like the following were prominently displayed near popular taverns and public places, soliciting the votes of the bewildered citizens:

The Fishermen Vote for Pompidius Rufus as Edile.

The United Goldsmiths Want Cuspius Pansa for Edile.

The latter, as other similar notices indicated, was the choice of gilds as varied in their interests as the trade unions of the jewelers, the muleteers, the carpenters and the worshipers of Isis.

Casellius Marcellus is put forward for the same office in a notice which would appear rather amusing in our day:

His neighbors favor Casellius Marcellus.

That the influence, however, of this politician extended beyond the circle of his immediate friends is evident from advertisements showing that he

[3] "Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero," pp. 46, 47.

had the support of the wagoners, farmers and other unions. Even Venus, the protecting goddess of Pompeii, is made to declare herself in favor of his election:

Venus Wants Casellius for Edile!

Neither did the gilds fail to put forth the usual electioneering promises. Thus in the year 73 the Bakers' Union of Pompeii canvassed for C. Julius Polybius, because "he brings good bread." Probably he had promised them to secure a reduction in the price of grain, or other similar favors. Particular oddities are the announcements of such gilds as the "Night Drinkers" and the "Sleepyheads," indicating in the former case, we may presume, the propensity of the members to carouse until the morning. Certain women, likewise, as the placards show, were carrying on a vigorous campaign for their political favorites. There is nothing new beneath the sun, as all these discoveries show! A list of the various political posters was drawn up at Paris by P. Willems in 1887.[4]

It was not, as would appear, such canvassing that the Roman statesmen dreaded, but rather the secret gatherings in which the gilds were made a cloak for ulterior and dangerous designs. They were the anarchist and I. W. W. tactics that not seldom led to the disruption of Roman trade

[4] *"Les Elections Municipales à Pompéi."*

unions and prevented the attainment of economic ends.

In the provinces especially, the Emperors exercised the greatest watchfulness. A classical illustration is that which occurs in the famous correspondence between Pliny and Trajan. The former, writing from Nicomedia, desires to obtain permission for the organization of a gild of craftsmen to serve as a fire department for the city. He recommends the project favorably, and argues that, since only about 150 members are to be admitted, all of them craftsmen, he will be able to see to it that no unlawful purposes are pursued.[5] The Emperor, however, is not convinced. In his reply he states that all previous societies formed in that province, under whatever pretense, have invariably degenerated into political clubs. "Let us bear in mind," he says, "that this province, and in particular this city, have been disturbed by factions of just this kind."[6] Yet Trajan was not opposed to gilds as such, and conferred special privileges upon a bakers' union in Rome; nor were the gilds as uncommon in the provinces as a passage from Gaius might suggest.

This tolerance however does not imply any respect shown for labor. Interest in the laborer for his own sake, or for the love of God whose image he bears, was unthinkable to the pagan

[5] Plin. *Ep. ad Trai.*, 33.
[6] Trai. *ad Plin.*, 34.

mind. Paganism was never concerned about the life and condition of the poor. Mr. Fowler rightly states the situation when he says:

> The statesman, if he troubled himself about them at all, looked on them as a dangerous element of society, to be considered as human beings only at election times; at all other times merely as animals that had to be fed in order to keep them from becoming an active peril. The philosopher, even the Stoic, whose creed was by far the most ennobling in that age, seems to have left the dregs of the people quite out of account. Though his philosophy nominally took the whole of mankind into its cognizance, it believed the masses to be degraded and vicious and made no effort to redeem them.[7]

There was indeed little hope for labor under paganism. But even that glimmer of a brighter future was relentlessly extinguished when he turned from sound labor principles to espouse the cause of mere political demagogues.

A cartoonist in the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* significantly presents the labor issue. A marble monument, firmly based, majestically planned and executed with consummate skill, is pictured as partly pried loose from its pedestal. At its foot stands a Bolshevist laborer, trying to shatter its base beneath the vandal blows of his huge hammer. The symbol wrought in stone is emblematic of a true, constructive labor unionism. It represents the figure of a strong woman, nobly conceived by the artist, dignified, intelligent, alert, with a child standing at her knee. Her head is

[7] "Social Life at Rome."

lifted upward in serious thought and earnest purpose, while her eyes are earnestly questing the heavens for guidance. Her right hand upholds a flaming torch, not the symbol of anarchy and destruction but of popular enlightenment; her left holds, in strong and graceful poise, the massive oval of her protecting shield on which are recorded the immediate demands, made by her for the safeguarding of the worker's home. Such is the true gild concept.

"Erected through years of constructive effort on the part of the workers and dedicated to further their just interests," is the legend inscribed on the pedestal. "After years of patient toil a constructive monument of the achievements of organized labor was built, and each year finds more and valuable additions made to our masterpiece," says the *Carpenter* in reproducing this drawing. It is true that the ideal of labor unionism that it symbolizes is not fully realized, particularly on its religious side, yet in part at least it has been achieved. And is all this to be destroyed, ideal and achievement alike? "And for what?" Such was the question asked by the organ of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.

Standing by with idle hands, as the artist pictures the background of his scene, is a crowd of workers, men and women, whom starvation and despair may at any moment drive to deeds of vio-

lence. But this is neither more nor less than part of the cunningly devised plan of unscrupulous labor leaders who themselves incur no losses. In the distance loom the black scaffoldings of incompleted structures against the dark skies. "Throw away your constitution and strike with your class!" is the cry sent up to the labor unionist by a blatant press, often supported out of the money of the anarchist rich, while the same demand comes in a rising treble from the red revolutionists.

It is not through anarchy that the laborer can achieve his end, but by a sane progressive system of trade unionism that will not disregard the dictates of religion; by a rightful use of the ballot which shall assure him the legislative measures that can safely and surely help to bring about a true democracy in industry as in politics; and finally by a gradual education in cooperative enterprises that will enable him to take an intelligent part in the ownership and management of the means of production on which his livelihood depends. So alone may we hope for peace, contentment and popular prosperity.

CHAPTER IV

STATE PATERNALISM AND SLAVERY

THE special privileges which from time to time were conferred upon the gilds by successive Emperors became in turn the occasion of abuses. Men often joined gilds with which they had no trade relations, purely for the sake of the proffered advantages, and even became members of many gilds at the same time. Hence stringent regulations followed, which led the way to State interference to such a degree that life in the gilds became almost intolerable. The lesson of the Egyptian labor corporations was now to be enforced by the misery of the Roman trade unionists.

Once assumed, the paternalistic attitude of the State was never to lessen, but constantly to increase. The complete degeneration of the laborer was to be the inevitable result. In return for privileges and immunities, the gilds were put into the service of the State. They had practically become a State institution in not a few instances and were given special legal defenders at court and special judges, during the reign of Alex-

ander Severus. Membership in many of them finally became compulsory by law.

Freedom of choice no longer existed in these "socialized" gilds, for men were born into them. They had become hereditary and there was no more hope of escape from them than from a Roman prison cell. Duties of every kind were imposed upon the members. They were henceforth impressed more than ever into the service of the State. Most unpopular, however, were the *sordida munera,* or menial duties they were obliged to render to the public, duties which had no relation whatever with the trades of the respective unions. They were to do chores of every kind for the State. The most oppressive imposition laid upon a great number of the gilds was the obligation of providing free grain or bread for the plebeian population of the capital. Upon the gilds which were free from such service the State imposed high taxes in lieu of this obligation.

The principal unions at the service of the public were the gilds of the shipmasters, the bakers, the swine-dealers and the lime-burners. The members drew their salaries from the State, were not subjected to torture when accused, and were later even freed from military service, as well as from other public and municipal duties. Strict property and inheritance regulations were imposed in particular upon the shipmen, who were most necessary for victualling the Roman capital.

When a shipman's family became extinct another was designated in its place by the prefect.[1]

Duties which in earlier days had been rendered by free compact had now become entirely compulsory. The statute books are full of penalties for men who dared to shirk their portion of the work. Fugitives from the unions, who sought to emigrate into the provinces in order to escape from this oppressive paternalism of the State, were returned like fugitive slaves by the provincial governors.

So strict was the hereditary obligation of remaining in the gild to which a citizen belonged that even a cleric, when found to have escaped from his corporation, was under a degenerate system of legislation obliged to return to it, if he had obtained a rank no higher than that of deacon. The special law to this effect was passed in the year 445.[2] This makes plain how the Church herself was shackled by the State, and how difficult it was for her in such a decadent civilization to fight her brave struggle for humanity and brotherhood, and to save what might still be saved.

Most deplorable everywhere was the condition of the bakers' unions. The hardships which membership in them implied made it most desirable to escape their thraldom. To render them less abhorrent special privileges were frequently

[1] *Cod. Theod.* XIII, *tit.*, 5.

[2] *Nov. Val.* 15; also *Cod. Theod.* XIV, 3, 11.

granted, such as the exemption from the *sordida munera.* The fact, however, that men were judicially condemned to such a gild tells its own sad story. Moreover, according to a regulation of Constantius, made in the year 355, any one who married a baker's daughter was compelled to enter the gild; and a law of Honorius, in 403, forbade any baker to marry a woman not belonging to the corporation. The penalty in the latter case was no less than confiscation of property and deportation.

The conditions under this form of State paternalism may give some indication of what, in another way, must be expected if an entire nation is enslaved under a servile State. This must of necessity come into existence if all the means of production are transferred from the capitalist to the State, in place of that happy readjustment which shall make of the majority of the workers, personally, part-owners at least in industry. The government bureaucracy, or in other words the successful politicians and clever demagogues, would practically possess complete control over the persons of the citizens. Those who would find least favor with them would be confronted with the most intolerable conditions until they too submitted to the new servitude.

What has been said of the development of the system of labor gilds in pagan times, even in its palmiest days, must not be permitted to leave the

impression, as we have already stated, that labor was ever honored save under the Christian dispensation, where the influence of the Church could be duly exercised; or under the ancient Covenant, in as far as the spirit of Jehovah was with the chosen people. A greater simplicity, it is true, prevailed in the earlier days of Greek and Roman paganism, before slavery had appeared in the vast proportions it was to assume in later centuries. This was particularly true of farm labor.

Yet we recall the struggles which from almost the earliest times took place between the patricians and plebeians. The latter were not even admitted to the ancient Roman cults, until gradually, by dint of their numbers, they created tribunes and, in 367 B. C., gained admission even to the consulship. But they were still excluded from the priestly colleges of *pontifices* and *augures*. Certain such functions remained to the last an exclusive privilege of the patrician class. This incidentally illustrates the vast difference between paganism and Christianity. So too the spirit of conquest excluded all democracy, since not the goods only, but the persons themselves of the conquered were left at the merciless disposition of the victors. The knights, or *equites,* were later to become the real capitalists, from about the middle of the second century before our era. They abused their political power at home to promote

their own interests, while in Asia we are to find them carrying on the most usurious transactions.

So, again, the speculators who enriched themselves in the provinces bought up, in turn, the rich Italian lands and cultivated them with unfree labor. Thus the excessive accumulation of farm capital in the hands of a few became the curse of Rome. This was known as the *latifundia* system. In spite of the ancient legislation which permitted no one to possess more than 500 *jugera* of the Roman public land, modeled after the ancient Greek laws, the small farmers were gradually bought out. In opposition to this ruinous form of land-capitalism a land-reform movement was begun by Tiberius Gracchus, and carried on after him by his brother Gaius Sempronius Gracchus. Both in turn met their death in the agitation they aroused.

As the last scene of this sad tragedy, we find the descendants of the farmers who had once cultivated the fertile neighboring lands, now reappearing as the proletariat of Rome, who must be kept from revolution by doles of bread and gladiatorial shows. The debased rabble thus created were indulged to their heart's content with pageants of brutal bloodshed and the groans of dying men. The munificence of wealthy citizens, and particularly of the emperors themselves, provided them with the splendor of public buildings and an

excess of civic magnificence.[3] Underneath all this display was rottenness and untold misery, particularly on the part of the vast slave population, who were left without any shadow of human rights.

The system of slavery was a fearful clog upon the labor movement. Slaves were the living machinery of Greek and Roman capitalism. Thousands of human beings were often the possession of one man of fortune. They were the great body of the producers, whose labor, if the master so desired, was limited by their physical endurance only. Their strength and talent belonged to him entirely. They could, above all, be replaced at little cost. To wear out a slave in a few years was a policy often practised as more profitable than properly to provide and care for him. With this system the poverty-stricken freemen and freedmen were compelled to compete.

The slave population of Rome in the early days of the Empire is estimated at about 1,000,000, as against only 10,000 of the upper classes, who formed the Roman plutocracy and alone enjoyed the fruit of the enslavement of the entire world. There was no middle class, since the free laborers were all sunk into abject poverty. There was comparatively little work for them in the mansions of the rich that were filled with an army of slaves, but there were calls for their serv-

[3] Guglielmo Ferrero, "Ancient Rome and Modern America," pp. 24–29.

ices from those who themselves were not able to purchase slave labor or were not provided with requisite craftsmen.

Though the free worker did not, therefore, disappear entirely, as some imagine, yet his life was one of untold misery and degradation. No wonder then if he finally relinquished the struggle and degenerated into the class of " clients " who hung about the doors of the rich to maintain the pomp of the mansion, performed any menial labor and were treated little better than dogs, feeding on the bones that were thrown to them. No wonder if he fell still lower and descended to the level of the great mass of the people, the bulk of the proletariat, who lived in complete idleness and were supported by the State with doles of free grain, and later of bread and of oil. At times even vast sums of money were divided among them. Yet all this was not for any love of the people, such as moved the heart of Christ to multiply the loaves and fishes for the multitudes that had followed after Him, but to avert the persistent danger of mob uprisings. They must be fed or they might grow restless and uneasy, and end by tearing to pieces the handful of idle rich who were rotting amid their fabulous wealth and indescribable luxuries, the spoil of a world laid prostrate at their feet. Hence the " bread and circuses," for the equally idle masses, the public baths where they might loll about, the sensuous theaters, the

combats of gladiators and the human holocausts to satisfy their lust for blood. The demoralization which such a life produced can readily be understood and its fearful reaction upon all classes of labor.

But there are still other facts to be taken into account if we would fully comprehend the condition of the free citizen who sought in some manner to retain his own self-respect by honest and useful labor. We must remember that the large capitalistic enterprises of the day were carried on by slaves. These, at the height of Rome's glory, could be purchased by the tens of thousands. They could be bought at the lowest prices, could be supported on the coarsest food, and were, according to Cato's rule, only to sleep and to work, while the lash was mercilessly plied to keep them from failing beneath the strain.

Supplied with thousands of these wretched beings, who poured in wide streams through the portals of Rome with each new conquest, the wealthiest of the Senators did not disdain to carry on great industrial enterprises of their own. "Impoverished as industry in Rome ever had been and ever remained," writes Joseph Schings, "the poorer citizens nevertheless gradually succeeded in establishing various trades. As soon however as these promised to become remunerative the rich with their capital and slaves entered into competition, and mercilessly depressed the labor

of the poor citizen workers." [4] The position of the latter was made the more unbearable by the fact that the slaves themselves were a part of the capital with which free labor was forced into competition. The Roman law, moreover, maintained against the laborer all the injustice of modern individualism and confirmed in every way the absolute power of wealth. Worst of all there remained for the laborer the possibility of sinking into slavery himself, a fate too terrible for thought.

Hence, too, the utter disdain with which the free laborer was regarded by the haughty Roman. "All gains made by hired laborers," was Cicero's dispassionate judgment, "are dishonorable and base, for what we buy of them is their labor and not their artistic skill. With them the very gain itself does but increase the slavishness of their work." [5] Such was the judgment of Rome and Greece. Such was the judgment of all the pagan world. It is not the purpose to enter into this subject in the present volume. A single quotation from the Father of History, Herodotus, will suffice:

> I cannot say if the Greeks have copied the Egyptians in their disdain for work, because I find the same contempt spread among the Scythians, Persians and Lydians; in a word, because among the barbarians (i. e., all who were not Greeks)

[4] "*Socialpolitische Abhandlungen.*" Nos. IV and V, p. 44.
[5] "*De Officiis,*" I, 42, 150.

those who learn trades and even their children are regarded as the lowest of citizens. . . . All Greeks, especially the Lacedemonians, are educated in these principles.[6]

We are told that in Athens a law was actually proposed to reduce all artisans to slavery.[7]

[6] Herodotus, II, 167.

[7] Smithsonian Report for 1912, p. 599.

CHAPTER V

FROM SERVITUDE TO FREEDOM

LABOR was a badge of disgrace in the eyes of paganism. The laborers themselves were considered as nothing more than *proletarii,* "child-bearers," a term which should be applied only as a mark of honor under the Christian dispensation, but upon which the pagan mind impressed the meaning still implied in it to-day. The masses were meant only to toil and slave that a few might live in ease and opulence. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon and all the greatest moralists and thinkers of pagan antiquity could not rise above this standard.

Even the merchant was not ordinarily held in good repute. His position indeed was far more favorable. He might himself probably be a slave-holder possessed of no inconsiderable wealth. Yet it is none the less true that he too was despised by the Roman patrician unless he had amassed a fortune. Rome, like America, knew how to worship success. It has been shown by Nitzsch that until the war with Hannibal Roman senators themselves carried on trade; but always on an extensive scale. The reason for despising the small merchant, according to Cicero's view,

was that he could not ply his profession without practising deceit.[1] The rich bankers' gilds, on the other hand, whether in Rome or in the provinces, were always held in great esteem because of the wealth they possessed and were thus a powerful and influential factor in Roman life.

Labor however could boast of no such position. Its organizations evidently accomplished little towards the economic amelioration of the lot of the free workers. It is true that the very existence of the labor gilds through all the centuries of Roman history from time immemorial is a sufficient indication that the solidarity thus produced could not have been void of all results. Individualism, however, was supreme, as it again came to be under the Liberalism that followed the Reformation. The common good was but little regarded and the individual was exposed to the heathen law of the survival, not indeed of the fittest, but of the strongest. The protection of the weak was no part of pagan ethics. Usury and extortion could be freely practised upon him.

The conception of democracy was not even to enter into the workman's dream, much less into his life. Industrial democracy was a star that never swung into his ken.

But if paganism prevented the full efficiency of the gild system, yet the convivial element was never wanting in these societies. It was permitted

[1] Cicero, "*De Officiis*," I, 42, 150, 151.

their members to drown their miseries in acid wine. Even slave gilds had their banquets, carousels and orgies. Fellowship moreover was everywhere fostered by the gilds. Members of the *sodalicia,* or fraternities, could not even appear against each other in court.[2] Similar customs must have also prevailed in the labor unions.

Most important was the practice which dedicated every gild to some divinity whose feast was celebrated with great pomp and merry-making. Even when this religious instinct had been lost to a great extent, the statues of the god or goddess must still have held their station in the meeting places. Pagan religion unfortunately could do little to restrain the passions of men. With its strong appeal to man's inferior nature it often served rather to degrade still further rather than to uplift its votaries. Yet such faint glimmerings of truth as it retained may still at times have thrown a ray of hope into the dreary life of the laboring classes.

At the period with which we close our review the elements of dissolution were at work within the State. It is an absurd contention, put forth by the historian Edward Gibbon, and other atheist authors, that the decline of the Roman Empire was due to the introduction of Christianity. Only the preconceived purpose, that they must write to disprove the divinity of the Christian religion,

[2] Mommsen, "*De Collegiis et Sodaliciis Romanorum.*"

could lead to such extravagant misrepresentations. As Hilaire Belloc rightly says:

> The material decline of the Empire is not correlative with nor parallel to the growth of the Catholic Church, it is the counterpart of that growth, and, as one of the greatest of modern scholars has well said, the Faith is that which Rome accepted in her maturity; nor is the Faith the heir of her decline, but rather the conservator of all that could be conserved.

Already under the pagan emperors a class of country slaves, *coloni,* existed who were ascribed to the soil, *adscriptitii.* They could be sold only with the ground to which they belonged. Such was the effect of purely economic conditions that made such methods less expensive as the supply of slaves decreased and their price rose. Under the influence of Christianity this at once suggested the possibility of a more humane legislation by which the slaves upon all the landed estates at last found a home and were assured inviolable family ties. In the cities likewise they came to be regarded, even by the civil law, as human beings.[3] Thus a gradual emancipation was slowly being effected whose main humanitarian features must be ascribed to the Church alone.

As Paul Allard shows,[4] the great improvement in the condition of the slaves which we find had taken place before the end of the fifth century can

[3] H. Pesch, S. J., *"Liberalismus, Socialismus und christliche Gesellschaftsordnung,"* p. 646.

[4] *"Les Esclaves Chrétiens."*

not be accounted for by any theory of evolution. Similarly the beautiful teachings of some of the pagan philosophers were confined to mere words and never reduced to practice, except to a very limited degree. It was mainly Christianity which without violence gradually transformed the condition of the slave. Slavery itself was so completely embodied in the social institutions of the time that any attempt to sweep it away at once would only have ended in a bloody and futile revolution. The task of Christianity therefore was to begin by ameliorating the hard lot of the slave. In the fourth century great and saintly men like St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. John Chrisostom, St. Gregory of Nyssa, Lactantius and others arose to protest against the unnatural inequality thus introduced into human conditions. Under paganism no marriage between slaves was acknowledged by the Roman laws. These laws on the other hand were constantly improved by the successive Christian Emperors so as to ameliorate the condition of slavery. The apostate Julian was the single exception in this regard during the fourth century. Before the Church slave and master were equal in the sight of God. Slaves not only could receive sacred orders but were actually elevated to the episcopacy itself. A slave was lifted up to the very Chair of Peter, holding the highest office that the Church could bestow.[5] Thus by

[5] Pope Callixtus, A. D. 221.

the influence of the Church was labor restored to its true dignity in the minds of men. Two hundred years after the reign of the first Christian Emperor the Church had practically eliminated the evil of slavery, which the new wave of barbarian paganism was again to bring back until the Church could overcome it a second time.

The gradual, prudent and effective action of the Church in favor of the most oppressed class of labor and, so likewise, for the betterment of the conditions of the free worker and the closer approach of that democratic ideal which was to seek its expression in a true Christian democracy, is thus outlined by Abbot Snow, O. S. B.:

> At her suggestion the Christian emperors mitigated the harsh dominion, took away from the masters the power of life and death, gave the slave redress at law and legalized his marriage. The Church dignified the process of manumission by obtaining that it should take place in the Church before the altar. This gave facility and sacredness to the act, and the Church assumed the protection of the men thus freed, to shield them against further molestation. Council after Council in different countries made provision in favor of slaves. The churches were declared to be places of refuge for ill-treated slaves, securing thereby a fair investigation of their grievances.[6]

The Church constantly urged the liberation of slaves as a pious work. St. Melania alone, as the writer states, gave freedom to 8,000. Slaves belonging to any of the churches were never to

[6] "The Church and Labor," p. 9.

pass to other masters but to freedom only. Meantime they were carefully protected by strict ecclesiastical canons, and there was little anxiety on their part to exchange the state of safety and comfort, thus assured to them and their families, for the uncertain struggle that would face them with their freedom.[7]

That the economic condition of the free worker was still so precarious is to be attributed solely to the fact that the conquest of the Gospel over the souls of men was far from complete. The plutocracy of Rome had been sunk too deep in luxury and hardened into unfeeling selfishness by centuries of merciless cruelty. It could not be entirely transformed. Yet the Church of Christ never failed to produce her saints and apostles who were a rebuke to their age, to its riches, its lust and its oppression. In his review of antiquity Huber thus briefly describes the effect of Christianity:

> A new element of life, which at once seized upon the hearts of the people with wonderful strength, was given by the new religion to humanity, sick well-nigh unto death. A more striking contrast cannot be imagined than that between the dominant spirit of pagan times and the principles and ideas of the new religion, which therefore must be looked upon as a stranger come to us from a higher world. At the period of the enormous moral decline manifested in the fall of antiquity, for which science knew no cure or remedy, the needed help was afforded mankind by a contact of the human with the Divine.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 9 and 10.

The new religion declared that all alike, the mighty lord and the despised slave, were children of God, equal in the realm of grace. Mankind was to be only a single family under one Heavenly Father. On this unity was to be founded the Kingdom of God, the moral dominion of a world-wide community of Love. With what joy the oppressed and suffering must have hailed this message, as their new Gospel! Mankind was to be morally transformed. The world's servitude in the thraldom of pleasure was to be exchanged for the dignity of a moral freedom of the will; self-seeking and oppressive domination, for love and mutual helpfulness; relentless and heartless exploitation, for mercy and kindness; slavery and degradation of human beings, for respect towards all mankind; unbridled sexual lust, for chastity and abnegation; the disgrace of labor for its honor.[8]

This transformation was not indeed to be accomplished in a moment, nor yet in a century, throughout the entire world. It was never to be perfectly accomplished anywhere except where the teachings of Christ were accepted and practised in their perfection. The human will was always to retain its freedom to choose evil in preference to good. Yet a new era in history had begun, a new human society had been created in which selfishness was to give place to love, in which the family and the individual were henceforth to be held sacred and in which the goods of creation should be shared by all. "No power upon earth was able to stay the triumphant march of these ideas through the history of the world." It is only in proportion as the world returns to

[8] *Ibid.*, Huber, "*Der Socialismus. Rückblick auf das Alterthum*," 70, 71.

the truth and charity of Christ that it can ever hope to solve the economic and social problems, which under different aspect and in different degrees of intensity, are ever the same. Only a change of heart and a change of view, such as true Christianity alone can effect, will ever save the world economically and socially, no less than in a spiritual sense.

From the very beginning the Church worked among the laborers and the slaves of the great pagan empire. It was the slave population that crowded most numerously into her Fold, the poor and the disinherited, though the rich who spent themselves for Christ, the patrician and the centurion, were not wanting. As she grew in strength, she still sought, as her divinely entrusted mission, to impress upon poor and rich alike the maxims of the Gospel with their great twofold precepts of the love of God and the love of our neighbor. Her task was to lessen by every means in her power the evils which she could not prevent, and to save for a new civilization whatever was good and noble in the old. Her mission, then as now, was to strike at error wherever she saw it affecting the faith or the morality of mankind, wherever she beheld endangered the supreme ideal of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God.

The seed of democracy had been sown by her upon the earth, the new seed of a system of gov-

ernment, whatever its outward form, that should recognize the dignity of every human being as made to the image and likeness of God; the seed, too, of a system of economics, whatever its special aspects, that should demand an ownership not limited to a few nor absorbed by a communistic State, but personal to the workers themselves. The attainment of it should depend upon justice, thrift and ability, aided and guarded by Christian laws.

Thus, by the Catholic Church, at its very beginning, were laid the foundations of Democratic Industry on which the world must build again today if its structure is ever to be sound and lasting.

CHAPTER VI

RECASTING THE WORLD

IMPERIAL Rome, like every worldly power before her, like Babylonia and Assyria, like Egypt, Persia and Tyre, rose to the height of her culture and glory only to pass through a slow decline to a hopeless fall. Black and menacing, the waves of the barbarian deluge had long threatened to engulf her, until at last they broke their bounds. Nothing remained of all her former pride and power save a waste of desolation and the solitary ruins where the night owl nested and the lean wolf preyed. Stately mansions and ancient palaces were of no interest to the savage races that had applied the torch to their walls and dragged away their last surviving victims into slavery. Forest and field were the home of the new conquerors who cared not for the marble baths of Rome and her luxurious theaters.

Of all the glorious institutions of the past the Church alone remained, firm and unshaken. She, whose words had been but feebly heeded by a sensuous and decadent Roman civilization, and who alone might still have saved the ancient world from its impending ruin, now began again through slow centuries to educate and Christianize the

savage conquerors of the earth. Everywhere we behold her sending forth her fearless missionaries and erecting the monasteries of her monks. They stood in the lone wilderness as the outposts of a renascent Christian civilization. Except for her, Europe might still to-day be plunged in a savagery such as existed on the continent of America before the Cross was planted there by the hand of Columbus. With the fall of Constantinople, the last isle of ancient learning would then have been swallowed up in the barbarian deluge. All the culture of Rome and Greece would not merely have been buried amid the ruins of the ancient world, unknelled, uncoffined and unsung, but even unchronicled and unremembered forevermore. History itself would have ceased to be with the passing of the world's literature, its art and architecture. As Professor Thomas Nixon Carver of Harvard University rightly says of the great work, economic, social and religious, of her pioneer monks:

> One must not be unmindful of the splendid service performed by the monks of an earlier day in preserving the learning of the ancient world and handing it down to the newer civilization of modern Europe and America. Their part in the civilizing of the rude barbarians of northern Europe entitles them to the respect of all mankind. The laboring monks especially call for our admiration. The clearing of the land, the draining of the swamps, the preservation of the arts of horticulture and agriculture, and the further development of both, was constructive work of the very highest order. Moreover, it was performed at a time when construc-

tive industry was all but submerged by the general brutality and violence which prevailed over the whole of Europe.[1]

Thus in that new civilization labor was humanized, sanctified, dignified. The concept of Christian democracy sprang up anew with the Catholic Church, a democracy of labor and industry so far as the world was then prepared to receive it. Greatest of all civilizers in this early age were the Benedictine missionaries. Almost every province invaded by the barbarians was in turn invaded and conquered for Christianity and civilization by these heroic munks, in whom we behold personified the highest ideal of both labor and learning. More eloquent than many volumes is the mere mention of the great Benedictine civilizers of the modern world:

Augustine in England; Boniface in Germany; Anschar and Aubert in Scandinavia; Suitbert and Willibrod in Holland; Amandus, Remaclus and Ursmar in Belgium; Ruppert, Emmeran and Virgilius in Bavaria and Austria; Adalbert and Anastasius in Bohemia; Pilgrim and Wolfgang in Hungary; Gall and Pirmin in Switzerland; Leander and Isidor in Spain; Bruno in Prussia and Benno among the Slavs, and finally Lawrence Kalffon and Rudolph in Iceland are all names of great Benedictines who must be regarded as the first to lead the nations from the darkness of paganism to the light of the Christian faith and to the blessings of a civilized life. It is estimated that in France alone about three-eighths of the towns owe their existence to the work of the Benedictine monks.[2]

[1] "The Foundations of National Prosperity," by Richard T. Ely, Ralph H. Hess, Charles K. Leith and Thomas Nixon Carver, p. 306.

[2] Dom Maternus Spitz, O. S. B., "The Order of St. Benedict and the Foreign Missions," *Catholic Missions,* Dec., 1917.

If therefore we behold the earth emerging again from its deluge of barbarism it is due to these men of God and their fellows in the Faith. At the first view of the resurgent world we see mankind groping about once more in the most primitive stages of material development. Slavery had naturally again been introduced by the barbarian. For a second time the Church became a mighty factor in bringing about its gradual disappearance. Her first act indeed was to stay the bloody hand of savage violence. As Agnes Wergeland, former Professor of History at the University of Wyoming, writes, her ministers preferred "seeing the prisoner of war, the unredeemed hostage, the exiled culprit, enslaved rather than killed." [3] While there was life, there was hope for the unfortunates and the possibility of still aiding them. She next successfully bettered their lot and loosened their bonds. And finally, in large measure through the very force of her teaching, slavery gave way to serfdom.

We must remember that in the barbaric as in the classical pagan society the slave could not be married, he had no personal rights which the master was bound to respect and no place in society. Both in Germanic and Roman law he was "on the level of cattle and other mobilia." Need we wonder, then, to behold him brutalized and

[3] Agnes Mathilde Wergeland, "Slavery in Germanic Society during the Middle Ages," p. 16.

degraded under the new paganism as under the old? Marked by the collar about his neck, his closely cropped and bristly hair, his often deformed and mutilated body, and his branded and scarred skin, the slave was indeed an object of pity under paganism.[4] The mightiest influence to come to his relief was that of the Church, though she could not at once transform the spirit of the barbarian conquerors. As the author last quoted says:

> Another stronghold of hope for the slave was the power of the Roman Catholic Church. What the king represented within the political sphere the bishop represented within the moral. There is no doubt that, but for the constant good offices of the Church through her ministers, the improvement in the condition of the slave would have been of far slower growth. The bishop, of course, could, as little as the king, interfere with actual ownership or abolish slavery; but he tried to exercise a religious as well as a practical pressure upon the slaveholder. On the one side, mild treatment of the slave was always spoken of as one of the important evidences of a Christian spirit; on the other side, the churches and monasteries were recognized places of refuge for the fugitive or abused slave, the priest or abbot before giving the slave over exacting an oath or promise from the slave-owner not to do their refugee further harm.[5]

Many quotations from different Councils can be given to this effect. Yet various churches and ecclesiastics, as we know, were large slaveholders. This is not surprising. "In this respect, as in

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 61.

many others, the Church [by which word the writer refers to the individual churches, with their material needs] had to conform to the economic conditions of the time." Yet it everywhere remained true that: "In holding slaves as cultivators of her enormous estates the Church made servitude as comfortable an existence as it could ever become."[6] To this there was no exception. If monastery lands were used for selfish purposes, it could be done only in opposition to the teachings and the spirit of the Church herself. "Their ideal was not wealth, but welfare," says Father Bernard Vaughan, referring to these monks. "They themselves being workers on the land knew how to sympathize with fellow toilers." This remained true to the end.

Thus always the doctrines and principles of the Catholic Church were the very foundation of the new spirit of liberty that was to humanize the slave, safeguard his human rights and finally contribute so mightily to the destruction of slavery itself, and to bringing the world daily nearer to the true ideals of Christian democratic industry. It was from her monasteries that learning and art went forth over all the earth together with agriculture and the crafts. They were everywhere the great centers of civilization not only from a religious, literary and social point of view, but also in a purely economic and industrial way.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

"As the monasteries," says the great German historian, Johannes Janssen, "had been for centuries the schools of agriculture and horticulture, so too they were the actual nurseries of all industrial and artistic progress. It was in these institutions that handicrafts first developed into art." [7] To the same effect Huber-Liebenau writes: "Immediately upon the spread of Christianity churches and monasteries arose, and the latter were, until the fourteenth century, the nurseries of German industry and German art." [8] The same was true of every other land. Thus, to quote but a single instance where a volume might be filled with eloquent testimonies, the historian of Belgium writes:

If the conversion to the Catholic Faith was mainly the task of the missionaries, the introduction of civilization was mainly the task of monasteries. There the Benedictine monks played a very large part, both as civilizers and colonizers. Their monasteries were, from the sixth century on, centers of economic and intellectual life. Whilst some of their monks attacked the thick forests of southern and central Belgium with axes, others engaged in literary labors in the monasteries' libraries, transcribing the ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts, composing hymns and lives of saints, and opening schools for the education of the people. They planted in the very hearts of the people the roots of that strong religious spirit, which has steadily developed and which has become one of the characteristics of the national spirit of Belgium.

Each monastery became a kind of model farm, where the population of the neighborhood could learn the best agricultural methods. In the monastery, too, they could find physicians who

[7] "History of the German People," II, p. 2.

[8] "*Das Deutsche Zunftwesen im Mittelalter*," p. 16.

knew how to take care of the sick. The monastery, being protected by the respect that was inspired by the saint to whom it was dedicated, was also a place of safety in time of danger. Consequently, dwellings became more and more numerous around the monasteries, and villages developed under their influence and protection.[9]

More than this, while in many places the newly formed towns were forced to struggle for their liberties, or obtained them only after long delays, those founded by bishops and abbots, says Carlton J. H. Hayes, "received charters at the very outset."[10] So everywhere liberty went forth from the sanctuary close and the monastery walls in the meet company of learning and of labor.

"The movement for democracy in England was started by a monk," was the statement made in the Bible Room of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, by so "advanced" a Protestant minister as the Rev. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis. "They (the monks) carried civilization and Christianity in their arms, right during the Middle Ages and down to our times."[11] The light of historic truth is gradually breaking through the darkness that had so long overclouded the post-Reformation mind. With the passing of old prejudices the facts of the past are emerging in the dawn of a clearer day. When the walls of Rheims Cathe-

[9] Leon Van Der Essen, "History of Belgium."

[10] "A Political and Social History of Europe," I, p. 37.

[11] Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*, April 5, 1919.

dral trembled to the shock of the exploding shells the world with one voice acknowledged that it could not equal or reproduce the glory of those monuments of art the Middle Ages had bequeathed to us.

CHAPTER VII

SERFDOM AND THE CHURCH

THE slavery described in the preceding chapter was already shading off imperceptibly into a state of serfdom. Economic and religious reasons often combined to bring about the passing away of slavery. Where economic conditions had already prepared the way, as in the Roman days when the masters of landed estates often found it more conducive to their interests permanently to settle certain slaves upon the land and transform them into serfs, the Church utilized her opportunities in still further promoting the human rights of the unfree laborer. So too, after the days of the barbarian conquest, it was through the influence of the Church that the personality of the slave came to be more religiously respected and his family rights were rendered inviolate. A legal status was gradually assured him. He was granted property and even land.

The serf of the Middle Ages could no longer be sold, although the soil to which he was inseparably attached might be transferred with him to another lord. For his own benefit and for the support of his family he tilled the plot of

land set aside for him. On this too his permanent home was built. Though certain levies might be made on him for the lord's table, his main obligation was to offer a more or less definite proportion of his labor-time to the service of his master. Such was the essence of serfdom, at least in its latter stages.

While in the early days serfdom was but a mitigation of slavery, and often very similar to it, we find it developing anew at a later time as a consequence of military necessity among previously free populations. In fact, this entire period seems to be largely covered with a haze of uncertainty. Free owners of land may in many instances have voluntarily assumed a condition of dependence which preserved them from the violence of pirates and freebooters and thus assured them the yield of their harvest, not to mention the personal safety accorded by this means to themselves and to their families. Their land itself would naturally pass into the ownership of the lord. How far this accounts for the widespread condition of serfdom is difficult to say. But of all this the following chapter shall treat more fully.

As in the case of slavery, so in that of serfdom the Church was often instrumental in again liberating the serfs and everywhere successful in bettering their condition. She provided for their moral and religious welfare and for the enforcement of laws protecting them. Economically

their lot was not necessarily bitter or hard. Their person and property were to be their own. Even their service to the feudal lord was more and more limited and was definitely restricted to certain days, aside from special season and duties.

To render the serf secure in his tenure of the soil the Church in Germany imposed a penance of three years' duration upon the master who arrogated to himself the right of selling his serf. She made no distinction between the killing of a serf and a freeman. In England likewise special penances were imposed for the manslaughter of a serf by a master. The Synod of Worms renewed in 868 a regulation which protected the serf even when guilty of capital punishment. "If any one has put to death, without judicial sentence, a serf guilty of a crime that is punishable by death, he is to atone for the shedding of blood by a penance of two years." The more the rights of the serf were imperiled, the more the Church came forward in his defense. Not only did she protect him against the abuse of power, but in his day of need she took him to her bosom, clothed, fed and sheltered him.

As a practical illustration of the success achieved by the Church in the liberation of the serf as well as of the slave we need but turn to the Anglo-Saxon documents of England which have survived the wars and vicissitudes of more than a thousand years.

Slavery was still the universal custom of the land when Catholicity achieved its triumph. When slavery had been abolished the condition of the early serf, attached to the soil, differed as yet but little from that of the slave, since both still remained completely at the mercy of their masters. The Church alone was interested in the fate of one as of the other. But to abolish serfdom by a stroke of the pen was no more possible than it had been to abolish slavery. In each case churchmen and monks accommodated themselves to the economic conditions of the times where these were not considered morally wrong in themselves. But as in apostolic days, so now the Church insisted upon the essential equality of all men before God, upon the precept of charity and the doctrine of universal brotherhood, and in particular upon the reward of mercy to be accorded to him who freed a brother from his bonds. Clerics themselves set the example, at times in a most signal manner. How quickly their lesson bore fruit is evident from the constant emancipation of slaves and serfs, often in great numbers, which instantly followed.

That such actions were prompted by the faith which the Church had preached is clear from the purely spiritual reasons assigned in the ancient documents of manumission. "Geatflaed freed *for God's sake and for her soul's need,* Ecceard the smith and Aelfstan and his wife, and all their offspring born and unborn; and Arcil and Cole,

and Ecgferd Eádhun's daughter, etc., etc.," reads a characteristic document.[1]

In like manner Aelfred manumitted all his unfreed dependents " in the name of God and of His Saints," and prayed that they might not be oppressed by any of his heirs or kinsmen. " But for God's love and my own soul's need will I that they shall enjoy their freedom and their choice; and I command in the name of the living God that no one disquiet them, either by demand of money or in any other way." [2]

Often dreadful curses are pronounced upon any one who would dare to set aside such dispositions, especially when made in a last will: " Christ blind him that setteth this aside." And again: " Whoso undoeth this may he have the wrath of Almighty God and Saint Cuthbert." Such testators had often during life been very kind to their serfs, so that doubtless in many cases it had been preferable to remain under their care and protection. It is sufficiently common to find that such masters at their death not only freed their serfs but provided for them as a father would for his children. So Durcytel for his soul's benefit bequeathed a great part of his landed possessions to the church of St. Edmund, and part likewise to the bishop, " and let all my serfs be free, and let each

[1] " *Codex Diplomaticus,*" No. 925.

[2] " *Cod. Dipl.,*" Vid. Thorpe, Kemble, " The Saxons in England," I, p. 504.

have his toft, and his meatcow and his meat-corn." [3]

The spiritual benefits asked were both for this life and for the next, and often for the soul of relative or friend: "This book witnesseth that Aelfwold freed Hwatu at St. Petroc's for his soul both during life and after life." [4] "And I (Leófgyfu) will that all my serfs be free, both in manor and farm, for my sake and the sake of them that begot me (the souls of his parents)." [5]

It was moreover in the church and in the presence of the priest that manumission took place. "Here witnesseth on this book of Gospel," we read in the record of the monastery of Bath, "that Aelfric the Scot and Aethelric the Scot are made free for the soul of Abbot Aelfsige, that they may be free forever. This is done by witness of all the monastery." [6] So we read of Bishop Wulfsige freeing a number of serfs, "for Eádgár the King and for his own soul, at St. Petroc's altar." [7] The register of this church is preserved for us, and similar books of manumission were evidently kept in every church, like the registers of baptisms and marriages.

What was true in Saxon England was no less true of other countries. S. Sugenheim, in his his-

[3] "*Cod. Dipl.*," No. 959.
[4] Register, St. Petroc's Church. Kemble.
[5] "*Cod. Dipl.*," No. 931.
[6] "*Cod. Dipl.*," No. 1351.
[7] "*Cod. Dipl.*," No. 981.

tory of the termination of serfdom in Europe, repeatedly makes the same confession in spite of inveterate prejudices against the Church. He shows how in France the influence of the clergy was not seldom used to free the serf, or at least considerably to ease his burden. The frequent testamentary emancipations of serfs, often in great numbers, were, he tells us, " in almost every instance the work of pious and humane confessors or other priests." Like all historians, he admits the truth of the proverbial saying that in every land it was well to dwell under episcopal rule. Thus in Germany dependent church laborers were employed in their duties only three days of the week. The remaining time could be devoted freely to their own interests. So too in other countries the Church led the way.

In France the emancipation of serfs and hereditary tenants took place earliest in the ecclesiastical dominions, where, indeed, the condition of the dependent classes was always the most favorable.[8]

The efforts of the Church to ameliorate the lot of the serf or to free him entirely were, he believes, perhaps nowhere more glorious than in Scandinavia. The resolution taken by Saint Cnut to abolish serfdom entirely throughout his dominion he ascribes solely to the priesthood. " Of course," he adds, " the last portion of the eleventh

[8] Sugenheim, *" Geschichte der Aufhebung der Leibeigenschaft und Hörigkeit in Europa,"* p. 90.

century was not yet ripe for this. The clergy nevertheless worked with indescribable zeal to hasten the time for it." [9] The institution of serfdom, therefore, in spite of the frequency of emancipation by ecclesiastics or through their example and exhortation, could not at once be abolished. Particularly fortunate, however, were the laborers connected with religious houses. "Wherever monasteries arose," says Friederich Hurter, "progress began, the condition of the people was improved and friendly relations with dependents existed." Oppression, in ecclesiastical dominions, he adds, was an exception and freedom could be obtained more readily.[10] Even Socialist authors, therefore, when prepared to make independent and unbiased investigation must come to the same conclusion. "The Christian Church," writes Thomas Kirkup, "did much to soften and to abolish slavery and serfdom." [11]

Not only did bishops and priests, by their word and example, everywhere bring about a kindlier treatment and even the emancipation of the serfs, persistently influence legislation in their favor, throw about their person the protecting power of the Church, inspire men with sentiments of justice and affection in their regard as for true children

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 501.

[10] *Cf.*, H. Pesch, S. J., *"Liberalismus, Socialismus und christliche Geselschaftsordnung,"* pp. 664–685.

[11] "History of Socialism," 6th ed., p. 450.

of God and brothers in Christ, but they freely admitted them to the sacred office of the priesthood. Indeed there was no dignity within the power of the Church to bestow which might not be attained by the humblest serf. The Protestant Historian Kemble thus writes of the Catholic clergy in Anglo-Saxon days:

> Whatever their class interests may from time to time have led them to do, let it be remembered that they existed as a permanent mediating authority between the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, and that, to their eternal honor, they fully comprehended and performed the duties of this noble position. To none but them would it have been permitted to stay the strong hand of power, to mitigate the just severity of the law, to hold out a glimmer of hope to the serf, to find a place in this world and a provision for the destitute, whose existence the State did not even recognize.[12]

From what has already been said we are not surprised to find the statement made by this most thorough student of the period in question that the lot of the serf "was not necessarily or generally one of great hardship. It seems doubtful whether the labor exacted was practically more severe, or his remuneration much less than that of an agricultural laborer in this country (England) at this day (A. D. 1876)." [13] The Rev. J. Malet Lambert expresses a similar opinion of conditions of servitude at a later date. The spiritual and even the temporal provisions made for the serf, at-

[12] "The Saxons in England," II, pp. 374, 375.

[13] *Ibid.*, I, pp. 213, 214.

tached, according to the custom of the day, to the land of some conscientious Catholic master, might well be envied by countless laborers in our modern civilization.

"In his hard life the serf of the Middle Ages," says von Berthold Missiaen, O. M. Cap., "experienced a sense of true internal happiness, more lightsome than any known to the modern world of labor. He was filled with a living, religious faith, and felt himself possessed of a strong, serious moral power." Religion had spiritually liberated him and made him a freeman of God, the peer of knight and earl before the King of kings.

Faith, indeed, was living and active in Anglo-Saxon days. We behold the spectacle of kings at the height of their glory renouncing all their temporal possessions and laying aside their crowns to devote themselves entirely to lives of self-renunciation; of noble ladies and princesses retiring from the world to live for God alone in the seclusion of the cloister; of men of influence and power, with all the temptations of the world before them, thirsting only to suffer and die for Christ. Such a spirit of necessity reflected upon the economic conditions of the age. Though the time had not yet come for the universal emancipation of the serf, he was not unfrequently freed from bondage, as we have seen, and always treated with far greater consideration than could

have been shown him otherwise. An undeniable hardness which still remained in certain customs of the day must be explained by the difficulty of at once obliterating every trace of pagan spirit and tradition, and by the life of constant warfare and danger to which men were then exposed. To quote once more from the pages of Kemble:

> It was especially the honor and glory of Christianity that, while it broke the spiritual bonds of sin, it ever actively labored to relieve the heavy burden of social servitude. We are distinctly told that Bishop Wilfrid, on receiving the grant of Selsey from Caedwealha, of Wessex, immediately manumitted two hundred and fifty unfortunates whom he found there attached to the soil, that those whom by Baptism he had rescued from servitude to devils might by the grant of liberty be rescued from servitude to man. In this spirit of charity the clergy obtained respite from labor for the serf on the Sabbath, on certain high festivals and on the days which preceded or followed them. The lord who compelled his serf to labor between the sunset on Saturday and the sunset on Sunday forfeited him altogether; probably first to the king or the geréfa; but in the time of Cnut, the serf thus forfeited was to become folkfree. To their merciful intervention it must also be ascribed that the will of a Saxon proprietor, laic as well as clerical, so constantly directed the manumission of a number of serfs for the soul's health of the testator.[14]

The first duty of the Church, it must be borne in mind, was not to free the slave or serf, but to save his soul. Her chief effort, which was to be carried out in the face of all resistance, was to procure for him conditions under which ample leisure and opportunity might be afforded him to serve

[14] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 211, 212.

God becomingly and even perfectly. Equally with lord and king, he was declared by her to be in all truth her own spiritual child, sanctified in Holy Baptism, strengthened by the reception of her Sacraments, made partaker of the same eucharistic Christ in the sacrifice of the Mass, destined to an eternal fellowship with angels and saints, and already emancipated by the grace of God from the one slavery which alone is supremely terrible, the bondage of sin and Satan.

Here then was that potent seed of Christian liberty already striking root. Within it were contained all the elements of a perfect social order. Bourgeoning forth centuries later, in a soil prepared by ages of Catholic culture, it was to blossom at length into the world's most ideal democracy, a true brotherhood in commerce and industry, made perfect in the unity of that one faith which Christ had founded.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FEUDAL AND MANORIAL SYSTEMS

DURING the early ages of modern civilization trade gilds among our first Christian freemen were long to remain impossible for the simple reason that specialized trades were not sufficiently developed among them. The earliest gilds of the Middle Ages were therefore religious and social in their nature. Often they were mainly devoted to the preservation of order and peace at a time when marauding and violence were common, when governments, as we have seen, were not yet centralized, and when the great cities of the future were only in their first process of formation or development.

Civilization from the eighth to the eleventh century was indeed as remote from our own in kind as in time. The method of production which then prevailed is known to-day as the Family System. Its essential feature consisted in the fact that each household produced all that was needed for its own consumption without the aid of external agents. It was to be followed in the course of economic development by the gild system, the domestic system, and lastly by the stage of production, technically known as the factory system,

which continued unbroken to the World War.

Life, in its economic aspect, was almost entirely agricultural. Near the little village were the fields where each family cultivated the strips of land assigned to it or owned by it. There were meadowlands where the cattle were pastured in common, and forests where each villager might gather or cut the wood that was needed. Under the most fully developed system in England, each family owned a number of narrow strips of land, not adjoining each other, but scattered over entirely different sections of the fields reserved for cultivation. No one could thus receive only the most fertile or only the poorest soil. Every one might have a fair proportion of both.

At the period when this system had reached its complete development each strip was sown successively with a fall crop the first year and a spring crop the next, while the third year it was permitted to lie fallow. The result was an abundance of all the necessaries of life, if no disaster occurred to ruin the crops. Each family produced independently all that was needed for existence, for clothing, food and shelter. The Church provided in her turn for every spiritual want. The system was not ideal, neither, however, was it deplorable as conditions often existing in more modern times. The evils of the city slums were then unknown. The poet Goldsmith thus pictures it in his "Deserted Village":

A time there was ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man:
For him light labor spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

How far or how long this developed form of organization, in which cooperation and private ownership were combined, existed under the democratic control of free farmers will doubtless be difficult to say. In the period when we find this system of cultivation widely employed throughout England, Germany, France, Hungary and other countries, the land is usually in the possession of a lord, whose residence is known as the manor. It may be merely a substantial dwelling or else a lordly castle overlooking the humble thatched roofs of the villagers beneath. The estate of a single nobleman might at times consist not merely of a single manor, with its group of farms that formed a primitive village, but of many such manors extending over a great tract of land or an entire district. Hence the name under which this phase of feudalism is commonly known, the Manorial System.[1]

While there were still independent farmers and tenant farmers, the majority of the population in the Norman days of England came to be known

[1] Carlton J. H. Hayes, "A Political and Social History of Europe," I, pp. 28–36.— Thomas Nixon Carver, "Principles of Rural Economics," pp. 37–44.— James E. Thorold Rogers.

as "villeins," a name significantly derived from "villagers." They were not slaves, since they could neither be sold nor deprived of their right to cultivate for themselves the strips of land which they tilled for their exclusive benefit. Neither were they tenant farmers, since they paid no rent for the land which they used and handed on to their children to be tilled by them in turn for their own benefit, as an inalienable right. Neither however were they free, since they were "attached to the soil" on which they were bound to stay. They were serfs, therefore, yet their status, apparently, was superior to that of this class among the early Anglo-Saxons.

In lieu of rent, since money was not then in circulation, they rendered personal service to their lord. A portion of arable land, reserved for the latter, was known as the "demesne." Here two or three days of the week the villein worked for his master, besides performing other duties as emergency might suggest, known as *corvée*. So too he afforded assistance to his lord at harvest time in what were then called the "boon-days," besides supplying him with certain provisions. Such therefore was the institution of villeinage, the more modern form of serfdom. At times, however, the villein preferred to render up his personal lands, and to labor exclusively for the lord on his own farm or in his home, retaining possibly a small plot of ground and a garden for himself and his

family. Special classes of small tenants were the bordars, crofters and cotters. In the beginning a class of slaves still existed, but these soon disappeared.

In Germany, as also in France, there gradually developed the Great *Mäierhöfe,* with their numbers of unfree laborers, the *Hörige* cultivating the farms of the lords, and the *Diensthörige* attending to housework and craftsmanship. Even from the earliest times, according to Walther Müller, the latter might labor for their own profits when the domestic needs of their lords were satisfied. The manorial system in Germany will be dealt with more in detail in Chapter X of the present volume, " Labor under Charlemagne and After."

The origin of the great power given to the lord has already been accounted for. The early settlements of the newly emerging civilization found themselves exposed to attacks from all sides. There were not only the marauding bands of robbers infesting the forests and ready at all times for pillage and plunder, but the pirate crews that everywhere sailed the high seas and, like the Homeric heroes of old, swooped down on the defenseless villages as their lawful prize, to rob, massacre or enslave the unfortunate inhabitants. Such was a gentleman's profession among the pagan Vikings. It was necessary therefore for men to group about a powerful leader and to secure the protection which in times of raid could

be offered by the lordly manor and the unscaleable walls of a medieval castle. Its master was fighter and captain by profession. There too were the trained men of arms and the weapons ever ready at hand. It was therefore the necessary center of organization and defense, and the villagers gladly offered, in return for the protection accorded them, the service of their toil on stated days and in certain seasons.

Governments were not as yet evolved and centralized, so that men would look in vain for assistance to the King. Their own lord was their natural and willing defender, while he himself rendered fealty to a still greater lord, on whose help he might be forced to call at any moment of extreme peril and in whom he could find a new center of a wider and far more powerful organization. Thus every man gave obedience and homage to one above him to secure the measure of cooperation required for self-defense.

This therefore is the much-maligned feudal system which was a real blessing and necessity in its origin, and like every other system proved a burden and a just cause of discontent when its usefulness had ceased and its very reason for existence had passed away. This time arrived when the King himself was able to defend his realm and preserve law and order. The nobility, which had steadily grown in power and wealth, now merely lived upon the toil of the peasantry with-

out rendering any adequate service in return. Hence the peasants often sought their freedom by fleeing to the newly founded cities, when these gradually developed, or at times rose in arms against their lords. Such was the bloody Peasants' War which practically ended for the time the growth of the Reformation. In defense of his own princes Luther threw the weight of his personal power against the German serfs who had arisen against their lords and so crushed their hopes of freedom for generations to come. This they neither forgot nor forgave. Catholic as well as Protestant princes had misused their power and driven their serfs to desperation.

In many cases the serfs purchased their own liberty. Personal service rendered by them to the lord was gradually replaced to a great extent by money payment or they became hired laborers. In France the great majority of the serfs had already purchased their freedom by the fourteenth century, although in some few districts serfdom survived until the French Revolution. In England it had practically disappeared by the sixteenth century. In various other countries it was retained until the nineteenth century, and in Russia even until the latter half of that century.

The institutions here described naturally became more and more tyrannical and oppressive as they outlived their usefulness. Yet even in their decline during the later period of the Middle

Ages they were preferable to conditions existing in modern cities during the "progressive" nineteenth century. "Feudalism," admits Percy Stickney Grant, "gave the serf food, shelter and clothing in exchange for his labor and his military service. The serf had his stated place. He was a small partner in the concern and shared its profits."

He then compares it with the wage system to the disadvantage of the latter: "In time of war the State can take over the worker's industrial or military service, but in time of peace it does not insure him subsistence." [2]

The general method of production during the early Middle Ages was everywhere the same, in so far at least that each household, as we have seen, produced for itself whatever it needed to satisfy its own wants, without recourse to external manufactures. A few simple luxuries might at intervals be purchased by the lord of the manor or might later also find their way to the home of the peasant, but for the rest each family, or family group, such as manor or monastery, was producer and consumer alike. It felled the trees to build its dwellings. It spun the wool to make its garments. It planted and ground the corn to bake its own bread. With meadow and forest open to it, with its cattle, though not of registered breed, and its hives of bees, such as Virgil sang,

[2] "Fair Play for the Worker," p. 22.

it might feast on the Scriptural butter and honey, and live contentedly and happily in its state of the "simple life." Such was the bright side of this early life which had likewise its shadows and gloom. And yet, as Carlton J. H. Hayes says:

> On the other hand we must not forget that the tenement houses of our great cities have been crowded in the nineteenth century with people more miserable than ever was serf of the Middle Ages. The serf, at any rate, had the open air instead of a factory in which to work. When times were good he had grain and meat in plenty, and possibly wine or cider, and he hardly envied the tapestried chambers, the bejeweled clothes, and the spiced foods of the nobility, for he looked upon them as belonging to a different world.
>
> In one place noblemen and peasant met on a common footing — in the village church. There, on Sundays and feast-days, they came together as Christians to hear Mass; and afterwards, perhaps, holiday games and dancing on the green, benignantly patronized by the lord's family, helped the common folk to forget their labors. The village priest, himself often of humble birth, though the most learned man on the manor, was at once the friend and benefactor of the poor and the spiritual doctor of the lord. Occasionally a visit of the bishop to administer confirmation to the children afforded an opportunity for gaiety and universal festivity.[3]

Not a few of the English manors, like similar establishments upon the continent, were in the possession of monasteries or of ecclesiastics. In the former case they may have been left to communities of religious by the wills of the Faithful or were bestowed upon them by the liberality of

[3] "A Political and Social History of Europe," Vol. I, pp. 35, 36.

kings or nobles. Churchmen and religious in such instances simply conformed to the universal custom of their day. Whatever greed or ambition existed on the part of certain powerful prelates or abbots, it was the individual alone that was at fault. The monks themselves were, as a class, loved by the people. Of this we have abundant historical evidence. They were truly the stewards of the poor and their doors were ever open to the houseless wanderer. Referring to the Religious Orders of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, an Anglican historian, the Very Rev. W. R. W. Stephens, formerly Dean of Winchester, writes:

> They were large landowners, and this was in many ways a benefit to the people. The monks were continually resident, whereas the bishops and many of the lay proprietors were frequently called away from their estates on public affairs, and so hindered from looking closely after the welfare of their tenants. In districts where the towns were rare and small, the monastic houses must have been inestimable boons, not only to the traveler, who could obtain food and shelter there, but to the resident poor in the neighborhood. The condition of the people in many a secluded village or hamlet would have been wretched and barbarous in the extreme but for some monastic houses which had the means of remunerating labor and relieving distress.[4]

The mistake of modern writers in dealing with this period too frequently consists in merely repeating the inveterate prejudices of past centuries without any profound research into a subject so

[4] "A History of the English Church," Vol. II, p. 272.

little understood. A twentieth century point of view moreover prevents them from ever realizing the vast difference in social, political and economic conditions and needs that separates those times from our own, and the equally vast difference of mental attitude towards the most vital questions under consideration. They will therefore no doubt be startled to know that so important an authority upon the economics of the Middle Ages as Damaschke assures us that a degree of general social welfare and true popular happiness was reached under the feudal system which surpasses our very conception. Even at its worst the feudal system was a vast progress over the best conditions of labor that had ever existed in the pagan world of classical antiquity.[5]

As for more modern times, what was the end of all the vaunted civilization of the smug, self-satisfied nineteenth century except boundless dissatisfaction, unhappiness and not seldom abject misery such as the Middle Ages never knew? A clarification of our social vision is sadly needed, and this we trust our study of those same ages at their height of development will give to us in the picture of that Christian democracy of industry that was at length to be reached as the economic realization of their Catholic ideals.

[5] J. E. T. Rogers constantly refers to medieval labor conditions as relatively preferable to those of his day. "A History of Agriculture and Prices," etc.

CHAPTER IX

PEACE GILDS

WE have studied the position of the unfree or partially freed laborer. Going back again to the first centuries of the Middle Ages we can now in turn view the condition of the freemen of that early period as we behold them leagued together in the *frith* (peace) gilds of Europe, more than a thousand years ago. In the laws of King Ine, about the year 690, we first meet with the word *gegyldan*. We find it again in the laws of King Alfred enacted two centuries later. The meaning of that word seems now to be fairly clear.

The *gegyldan* were comrades mutually responsible for each other before the law, and leagued together for self-protection as well as for the preservation of peace and order. The name *Frith* (*Frieden* in modern German) or "peace" gilds, is therefore often given to these institutions. They were gilds only in the wide sense of the word since they were not voluntary organizations. The freemen of the early Saxon towns were divided into groups of ten, known as tithings. Ten such groups in turn formed a hundred. The

statutes regulating them were made the law of the land, and in the time of Athelstan we find them drawn up by the ecclesiastical and civil authorities.

"This is the ordinance," begins the official document, "which the bishops and reeves of London have ordained and confirmed among our frith gilds, both of thanes and of churls. . . . Be it resolved that we count every ten men together, and the chief one to direct the nine in each of those duties which we have all ordained; and afterwards the hundreds (*hyndens*) of them together, and one hundred-man (*hynden-man,* centurion) who shall admonish the ten for the common benefit." [1] The eleven officers were to hold and disburse the money, *gild* or *geld,* from which it is argued by some that the gild was named. We can readily, therefore, reconcile the two translations of *gegyldan* as gild-brethren [2] or pay-brethren.[3]

Although the question of labor does not enter here, except very indirectly, the frith gilds are of great interest from a civic and economic point of view, no less than in their cultural and historic aspect.

The earliest Saxon gild legislation which we possess in the laws of Ine and Alfred is concerned with the payment of the *wergild,* or blood money, which was to be paid in those primitive times when

[1] *Judicia Civitatis Lundoniæ,* Athelstan V. Thorpe, I, p. 230.
[2] Dr. Stubbs.
[3] Schmid, "*Gesetze,*" p. 589.

one man had killed another. Such laws were common among all the Germanic tribes. We find them among the Saxons, the Bavarians, the Alamanni, the Frisians, the Visigoths, the Salian Franks and others. A definite price was set upon every head, from king to freedman. Among the Saxons, it is thought that the *wergild* to be paid for a noble who had been killed was 1,440 shillings; for a freeman, 240; and for a freedman who had once been in bondage, 120. Money values, of course, cannot even remotely be compared with those of the present day. A slave, according to the London statutes, was to be compensated for at the maximum rate of half a pound, or less, " according to his value."

Since in many cases the man who had committed the deed could not pay his penalty, the relatives and the gildsmen were held responsible for a share. Thus, according to King Alfred's laws, if the man was without paternal relatives, but had relatives on his mother's side, the latter were to pay one-third of the blood money; his *gegyldan,* one-third and he himself the remaining portion. If he was without any relatives, the payment was to be made in equal shares by the *gegyldan* and himself. Without entering into the intricacies of this law, it is evident at once that the gild implied a solidarity almost as close as a family bond. This conclusion is important since it gives a true insight into the nature of gild life.

In studying these conditions, we realize at the same time the difficulties encountered by the Church throughout the European world in "taming and humanizing the countless petty chieftains and evolving Christian chivalry out of violence and brutality." The first mention of the *gegyldan,* it should be noted, is coincident with the victory of Catholicity over paganism. The earliest gilds, though far from perfect, were already in many ways a great power for good. Kemble says:

> If a crime were committed, the gyld were to hold the criminal to his answer; to clear him, if they could conscientiously do so, by making oath in his favor, to aid him in paying his fine if found guilty. If flying from justice he admitted his crime, they were to purge themselves on oath from all guilty knowledge of the act, and all participation in his flight, failing which they were themselves to suffer mulct in proportion to his offense. On the other hand they were to receive at least a portion of the compensation for his death, or of such other sums as passed from hand to hand during the process of an Anglo-Saxon suit.[4]

The object, therefore, of these gilds or tithings was to maintain the public peace; to preserve "the life, honor and property" of individuals; to bring the guilty to justice and provide defenders for the injured and the innocent, at a time when the power of the government was insufficient for these purposes. The power possessed by the gilds was legally delegated, and their retributive actions did not therefore correspond to the mod-

[4] John Mitchell Kemble, "The Saxons of England" I, p. 252.

ern lynch law, which presumes to take justice into its own hands without any legal sanction.

Private warfare, however, had been considered an inalienable right of the Germanic freeman in his pagan state. With his conversation every attempt was made to set legal limits to its continuance until it could be entirely abolished. Only where the existence of the family seemed to require it did the laws of Alfred tolerate such warfare, or where the offender made peaceful settlement impossible, in which case the injured party would have the support of the State. So again Edmund, towards the middle of the tenth century, deliberated with the counsel of his Witan: "First, how I might best promote Christianity. Then seemed it to us first most needful that we should most firmly preserve peace and harmony among ourselves, throughout all my dominion. Both I and all of us hold in horror the unrighteous and manifold fightings that exist among ourselves." [5]

It must not, however, be supposed that the payment of the *wergild* necessarily implied that human life had been taken. It included every peaceful settlement of feuds by means of money and all the fines that might be exacted for any injury, personal or domestic, or even for the aspersion of a man's good name.

[5] *Ibid.*, I, pp. 251, 274. *Eadm. Sec. Leg.*, Section 1. Thorpe, I, p. 246.

The complete statutes, however, of the frith gilds under Athelstan, from which we have already quoted, open for us a much wider view. We there come upon institutions of great economic, as well as legal, importance. They were not only the police departments of their day, free from all suspicion of graft, but the insurance companies, mutual benefit associations, purgatorial societies, and even to a certain degree the courts of justice — all in one — for the happy gildsman. Though imposed from without, they already contain much of the spirit of the free gilds which were now soon to arise.

One of their chief purposes was the recovery of stolen property. Where this was not possible compensation was made to the loser from the gild funds, or by a *pro rata* tax upon the brethren. A limit, however, was clearly set for the maximum amount to be paid for the unrecovered article. The pursuit of the thief was undertaken in common. If caught, summary justice was executed upon him. A reward of twelve shillings, in fact, was set upon the open killing of a thief by any of the brethren. The utterly unprotected condition of the citizens, which laid them open to pillage and robbery, led to such severity. The property that could be stolen consisted mainly in live stock and slaves. If the latter "stole themselves," i. e., ran away, they met the fate of a thief when caught. To compensate the owner each gildsman who pos-

sessed a slave contributed 1d. or half a penny. In particular legislations we can see the efforts made by the Church to shield offenders, especially if young and amenable to correction, while the institution of slavery, as well as the savage right of feud, was fast disappearing under her influence. She was doing what lay in her power to protect the unfortunate and promote Christian charity, advancing the great work of Christian Democracy.

The patience required to change certain immemorial customs and traditions, originally conceived in the spirit of a religion that had worshiped in the name of Thor and Wodan and to substitute in their place the practices of a faith which meekly bowed the neck of the fierce warrior beneath the sweet yoke of Christ, is often but little understood by the historian and critic.

The frith gilds in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries were as far removed from paganism as the dawn from the darkness, but the full day had not yet broken. Religion, charity and brotherhood were already strong and dominant principles in their statutes. And yet we cannot be surprised that something of a pagan hardness should still remain over from a time which was not as yet so far removed. Governments, moreover, while unable to protect the individual, believed themselves forced to countenance stringent measures and regulations that the country might not fall a prey to marauding bands of robbers.

Referring to the material aspect of the London ordinances, H. F. Coote writes:

> The regulations and provisions of this gild command our unqualified respect. They are irrefutable evidence of a high state of civilization. We have in them a scheme of mutual assurance, with all the appliances of carrying it out, combined with thorough comprehension of the true principle upon which such schemes are founded, and can alone be supported. For the gild not only satisfies itself that the claim is honest, but repudiates payment of it whenever the claimant has shown himself to have been contributory by his negligence to the loss of which he affects to complain. And, lastly, the gild, to secure the society against claims of unlimited and overwhelming amount, establishes a maximum rate of compensation.[6]

The religious element, however, was not forgotten. "And we have also ordained," wrote the drafters of the London statutes, "respecting every man who gives his pledge in our gildship, that should he die, each gild-brother (*gegylda*) shall give a *gesufel-loaf* for his soul (a loaf of bread offered to the poor in alms for the repose of the departed soul) and sing fifty (psalms) or cause the same to be sung within thirty days."[7] The offering of Masses for this purpose was of course, most common, as we find in the statutes of the true voluntary gilds which were now to come into existence. It may be noted that in one instance the singing of the Psalter or the offering of a Mass is left to the choice of the gildsman.

[6] Henry Charles Coote, F. S. A. "Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archeological Society," IV, p. 12.

[7] *Ibid.*

Charity, too, although it began at home, did not remain there. The poor and afflicted were the objects of special consideration, and pilgrims were helped upon their way to accomplish their pious vows or to satisfy their devotion by kneeling at the tomb of our Lord or praying at the sites of His sacred passion and death in distant Palestine. It was evident that under these Christian influences the remnants of pagan harshness were soon to melt away like the last drifts of winter's snow beneath the genial sun of the new springtime of Catholic charity.

From the earliest origin indeed of the medieval gilds, a Catholic spirit was already breathing through them. Even in their most primitive days it was felt like a waft of Spring through the misty forests, awakening the newly organized institutions to a newness of freedom and a fulness of life and beauty which paganism could never know. If something of the chill and gloom of earlier traditions doubtless still clung to them, it was gradually yielding to the warmth of Christian charity and the light of Christian truth. The world was slowly being prepared for its first concept of the full scope of Christian Democracy.

Frith gilds in fine were not limited to the Saxons in England, but were common likewise upon the continent. The same conditions called forth the same remedy. In France they were organized by the bishops. "Each diocese," writes Unwin,

" became the center of a large association which embraced all classes, peasant and noble, cleric and lay, town and country." They were known as *La Paix,* or *La Commune de la Paix,* a name identical in meaning with the Saxon frith gilds which we have here described.

CHAPTER X

LABOR UNDER CHARLEMAGNE AND AFTER

THE world *gild* itself, *geldonia* in Carlovingian Latin, occurs for the first time in the year 779. It is found in a law issued by Charlemagne, decreeing that no one should thenceforth presume "to bind himself by mutual oaths in a gild." From the mistakes made by the earliest copyists in transcribing this term we may reasonably conclude that it was not yet in common use.

In 821 the lords of Flanders were cautioned, under penalty of heavy fines, to prevent their serfs from forming associations binding under oath. Similar injunctions were again issued in a capitulary of the year 884. The clergy as well as public officials were to instruct the serfs "not to enter into the combination commonly called a gild (*quam vulgo geldam vocant*), against those who may have stolen anything." [1] The serfs, in other words, were not to take the law into their own hands, but to leave its execution to the proper authorities. Such associations would doubtless have helped to protect them in those unsettled times,

[1] Cap. A. 884. Pertz, I, 553.

but a serious menace was seen in them for the State.

Modern authors in general vie with each other in their denunciations of Charlemagne for his attempted suppression of the gilds, confounding them with the craft gilds of later years. Centuries were still to elapse before economic and social, as well as political conditions, could make these organizations possible. Moreover, it was not against the gilds, but against the oaths, which he believed might lead to conspiracies and national danger, that the legislation was directed. Political and civic conditions were in a ferment. The centralization of power was real only in so far as it depended upon the personal influence of Charlemagne himself. Disruption in fact followed the very instant that the grasp of his own strong hand was relaxed in death.

But another reason also existed for the suppression of some of these early gilds. Their secret conclaves, it is believed, were in some cases merely a cloak for continuing the idolatrous practices which had survived from heathen times. That pagan organizations, somewhat similar in purpose to the gilds of the Frankish serfs and the Anglo-Saxon freemen, had existed among the ancient Teutons is sufficiently established. The old German warriors met and mingled their blood and drank it as a mutual pledge that they would defend and avenge each other. "Dost thou recall,

Odin," says Loki in the *Lokasenna,* "how when our pledge began, we mingled blood together?"

It is not surprising therefore that the Church should at times have been obliged publicly to forbid such organizations, even as duty compels her to do in our day. Thus a canon of the Council of Nantes forbids "*collectae vel confratriae, quas consortia vocant.*" It is unreasonable to inveigh against such regulations. Mistakes may undoubtedly have been made, and even personally selfish motives may have swayed individual ecclesiastics; but the Church herself has from the first been the champion of all reasonable freedom of organization. Even the oath itself, which at every period was regarded an essential condition for admission to the gilds, was never in principle forbidden, and virtually never opposed by her in practice during the entire course of the Middle Ages.

But the Church was no passive spectator of the progress of the gilds. Her fostering care was one of the mightiest factors in their development. As George Unwin says in relation to the earliest Frankish gilds:

> Apart from the reference to the mutual oath, nothing is said of the religious character of these associations; but in that age the cooperation, official or unofficial, of the clergy was an almost indispensable element of any popular organization. We also know that by the middle of the ninth century the clergy of the diocese of Rheims were allowed to superintend the formation of religious gilds bearing essentially the same character as those which, throughout the

Middle Ages, underlay every form of social and economic organization.[2]

These religious gilds indeed are of the highest importance in the history of labor, since from them in many cases the labor gilds were later to arise, directly or indirectly. Such was especially the case where the establishment of such unions, whether of tradesmen or of journeymen, was regarded with suspicion, while the Church harbored and fostered them.

In the time of Charlemagne many of the trades already existed; but the tradesmen themselves were largely of servile condition. They were often perfectly organized; but never by their own initiative. The serfs and other unfree laborers — among whom must be numbered not only mechanics, but even small dealers and professional artists — were at times grouped according to occupations by the lord to whose manor they were attached. Servants, hunters and shepherds were similarly organized. The entire institution was known as the *Frohnhof* or manor. The laborers thus employed were known as *Hörige* or serfs. Each division was under its master, who had the power of exercising judgment and correction, unless a misdemeanor occurred which was to be referred to a higher official. The last court of appeal was the lord of the manor himself, whose power was limited, however, by the law of the

[2] "The Gilds and Companies of London," p. 17.

land.[3] It is evident that these organizations could in no sense be spoken of as gilds.

The unfree craftsmen did not, however, work exclusively for their lord. Their duties were variously limited, and the remaining time was given to labor for their own profit. They might either dwell in the manor itself or in the vicinity. Many would probably take up their home in the lord's manor during the time devoted to his service. Charlemagne himself was liberally supplied at his various manors with skilled craftsmen and even expert artists: "workers in gold and silver, blacksmiths, shoemakers, turners, wagon-makers, carpenters, armorers, lace-makers, soap-boilers, brewers and bakers." Many interesting details regarding the system employed by him are to be found in the *Capitulare de Villis* of the years 809 and 812.[4]

In the *Lex Burgundionum* it is definitely stated that the unfree craftsmen were not exclusively engaged by their masters, but were permitted publicly to practise their various trades.[5] Such, in the opinion of Müller, was the custom during the entire period of serfdom.[6] They might sell their wares or their labor. In the "*Vita Gebehardi*," [7]

[3] Dr. Otto Gierke, "*Das deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht*," pp. 176–178.

[4] Pertz, I and III.

[5] "*Liber Constitutionum.*"

[6] Walther Müller, "*Zur Frage des Ursprungs der Mittelalterlichen Zünfte*," pp. 47, ff.

[7] *Cap.* 19.

we read how the Bishop organized his craftsmen in the city of Constance according to their different trades, with a master set over each single craft. They were to spend certain days at the Monastery of Peterhausen, near the city, where they received their meals and performed the necessary work. They would then return to their shops and their homes in Constance. This gives us an excellent picture of the times and shows how bishops and abbots, here as elsewhere, conformed to the economic systems of their period, while all concede that under the abbot's jurisdiction were ever to be found the most ideal conditions of the day.

The system here described was indeed far removed from the supreme ideals of Christian democracy applied to industry. Yet it was an immeasurable progress over the position of the laborer in the classic days of Rome and Greece, while it afforded the humble toiler a surer subsistence and a more quiet and contented life than he was to enjoy at a much later period under modern capitalism. Pauperism and starvation were alike unknown. The lowliest worker and his family were always provided for and the supplies of the monasteries were everywhere at his command, should he stand in need of them. So, too, the beneficed clergyman was bound by canon law to spend on the Church or on the poor all that

remained to him after his own proper sustentation. It was not the fault of the Church if he abused his opportunities. Even in Wolsey's favor, who lived at a far later period and represented the extreme of ecclesiastical ambition, Joseph Rickaby, S. J., writes: "It may be allowed that he spent his wealth nobly. And so did other great ecclesiastics of the age, which the plunderers of the next generation did not. What is known at Oxford as 'the House' is forever sacred to the memory of the Cardinal of Yorke."

Not all German laborers were serfs in the early centuries here described. The number of free craftsmen was constantly increasing. There was also a considerable class of free farmers who owned the soil they tilled, as well as a number of free mark and village communities. Yet ordinarily even these stood under the protection of some great lord. It must, in fact, be remembered here that the entire civilization of that period was built upon the one idea of service. The lord himself was only less dependent than his serfs. It was the duty and the glory of each man, whether free or bond, high or low, to be faithful to the master who was over him. "I serve," could be the motto of the proudest lord.

A greater freedom gradually prevailed among the serfs. Their service was reduced to a more limited number of days. It even passed from the

individual to the trade group, which could assign definite members to perform in turn the customary duties, thus always leaving a number free to follow their own occupations. A tax was finally paid in place of personal service, and so serfdom itself passed out of existence.

During the course of these developments the groups of workmen had formed their own organizations under the care of the Church. Every German gild, as Gierke remarks, was religious, social and moral in its purpose, besides following its own specific aims. Even before their emancipation the serfs had obtained distinct rights which their lords were bound to respect. With their full freedom achieved they naturally betook themselves in ever increasing numbers into the cities, which thus received a great labor population. Free gilds sprang into existence everywhere, each with its own chaplain, its own altar or chapel, and its oblations of candles, its offerings for Masses, and its benefactions to the poor.

It must not, however, be concluded that we must therefore seek the origin of the gilds in the unfree labor groups, organized by the Frankish lords upon their manors. This was but one of many factors which all combined to further the same Christian ideal. The essence of the gild was brotherhood, religion, mutual helpfulness and social fellowship among equals. Everywhere the same forces were at work. Everywhere the

Church stood by, protecting, directing, leading upward to a larger freedom and a more perfect charity.

Outside the Church violence and barbarity, sword and conquest, the untamed powers of nature reigned unchecked, both before the time of Pepin and Charlemagne, and after them under their more feeble successors, and indeed long after the complete extinction of their race. In spite of the contempt for learning and culture, there existed still a deep reverence for religion and its ministers; in spite of strong passions, faith was living. Monasteries were held in high honor as abodes of purer life, and persons high in rank took pleasure in visiting them, and frequently chose them as places of retreat for the remainder of their lives. Discipline and sound principles could come from the Church alone; enlightened legislation could be her work alone; and under her influence alone could the conditions of society be improved. To her was due the mitigation and repression of slavery, the first organized care of the poor, the institution of the Truce of God, the establishment of places of education, and every true form of progress.

Princes and people were eager to confide the weightiest interests to the clergy and to increase their external means of power and influence; for their learning and virtue they merited trust, and by their character and authority they were the most sure support of public order. The Church on her side did her utmost to obtain safeguards against the many attacks and acts of aggression of princes and nobles, who sometimes from desire of vengeance, oftener from mere covetousness, imprisoned bishops and priests, robbed them, misused them and thrust others into their places.[8]

It was this constant interference of the State with the Church, beginning with the reign of Con-

[8] Dr. Joseph Hergenröther, "Catholic Church and Christian State," I, pp. 256, 257. See: Ratzinger, "*Geschichte der Kirchlichen Armenpflege,*" pp. 141, ff.

stantine, the first imperial champion of Christianity, and continuing down to our time, that has ever hampered her power for good, thrusting unworthy prelates in high places or preventing the great unselfish works of zeal and piety undertaken by others. Yet in spite of every difficulty from within or from without she has steadily carried down the ages the torch of Christian truth that lights the way to all true liberty.

And here a little digression may be of interest to complete the picture of this early civilization. No later than the year 858 we find mention made of gilds of priests as well as of the laity in the capitularies of Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims.[9] No restriction of any kind is placed upon them, except that they must not transgress the bounds of "authority, usefulness and right reason." Here therefore we have the attitude of the Church clearly defined at the very beginning of gild history. When the limits thus described are flagrantly transgressed, it is not only her right, but her duty to interfere. The salvation of souls is then imperiled. The social institution thus censured has become a menace to society and religion.

Since frequent mention is made of these gilds of priests that sprang up at the beginning of the Middle Ages, and much misunderstanding exists upon this point, a word of explanation may well be offered. They were known by the name of Gilds of

[9] *Labbei Concilia, ed. Coleti, t. x., cap.* 16, p. 4.

the Kalends, because they met on the first day of the Roman month, the *calendae*. Their purpose was the discussion of pastoral interests. Thus the clergy of certain sections would meet for divine service, common deliberations and the usual feast which was one of the essentials of every medieval gild. Special objects, such as the maintenance of schools, the preservation of documents and archives, were likewise kept in view. The members are occasionally reminded in their statutes that their gilds exist "not merely that they may derive from them present advantages and temporal gains, but rather that they may obtain heavenly and eternal benefits." They are admonished to take their meal becomingly and with the fear of God. Pious reading and singing of hymns are suggested. A limited number of laymen were admitted into these gilds at a later period; but their wives, in spite of frequent requests on the part of their husbands were excluded, until in 1422, after many centuries, slight concessions were made upon this point. They were such, however, as hardly to modify the strictness of the original regulations. The main feature was that the wives of the lay members took their turns in offering hospitality and services to the gild.

That in the very earliest and semi-barbarous times abuses occasionally occurred at the meetings of these gilds is evident in particular from the capitulary of Archbishop Hincmar (852). It is

entirely unwarranted, however, to draw the conclusion, as has commonly been done in a very unhistorical way, that such happenings were the rule and not the exception. During the many centuries of the existence of these gilds only a very few references to excesses can be found, and these occurred at the very beginning of gild history. They simply serve to illustrate in a striking manner the watchfulness of the Church over her children and her care to correct without delay whatever is evil. It is from prompt ecclesiastical reprimands that we have our knowledge of these matters. The capitularies of Archbishop Hincmar (852) and of Bishop Walter of Orleans (858) are the sources of our information. The very documents in question, with their sound moral lessons, afford the best evidence of the high ideals maintained by the Church at every epoch of history. The facts we have alluded to prove nothing more than that the vices and passions of the pagan orgies of earlier times were still a danger to the recently converted Catholics, and that instances occurred in which even the clergy were not free from blame. With the more complete infusion of the Catholic spirit these abuses disappeared. The incidents therefore are only another splendid witness to the power for good which the Church has ever exercised in the world.

" The power of religious sentiment," Emerson says, in describing that Christianity which " like a

chemistry of fire" drew a firm line between barbarism and culture —"The power of religious sentiment put an end to human sacrifices, checked appetite, inspired the Crusades, inspired resistance to tyrants, inspired self-respect, set bounds to serfdom and slavery, founded liberty, created the religious architecture: Yorke, Newstead, Westminster, etc.— works to which the key is lost with the sentiment which created them." With a reunion of the world in that one same Faith, as living to-day as in the day of the Apostles or of the builders of Oxford and of Chartres cathedral, can that golden key be found again.

CHAPTER XI

ORIGIN OF MEDIEVAL GILDS

THERE is great divergence of opinion about the origin of the free medieval gilds which are next to engage our attention and wherein we shall find exemplified the highest conceptions of the dignity of labor and the truest realization hitherto attained of the democratic control of industry. Though apparently it matters little to the social student or reformer whether they were derived from ancient Rome or Greece, or sprang up from the soil itself of the respective European countries, under the influence of the Church, the question in reality is of vital significance. Whatever their earliest origin, it was the Church, as we shall see, which impressed upon them, and upon the civilization in the midst of which they developed, those marvelous Christian characteristics which essentially distinguished them from every similar form of organization historians may find in Egypt, India or China, in Greece or Rome, and even among the barbarous tribes from which many of the great nations of modern Europe have sprung.

It is true that long before the medieval gilds came into being, the Roman *officia opificum,* or

trade unions, had existed not merely in Rome itself, but also in the ancient cities of Gaul, Britain and other provinces under Roman dominion. This civilization, however, was soon to be swept away, and about such unions the history of the centuries that immediately followed is silent. Little can now be learned of economic conditions during these submerged epochs of history except that slavery was again made the practice of the barbarian conqueror, and the slave was deprived, as in the former pagan days, of every human right. Yet the many analogies and even possible points of contact existing between the ancient and the medieval gilds have naturally given rise to a theory which would see in the medieval trade unions the lineal descendants of the ancient labor organizations. In the same manner the merchant gilds of the Middle Ages are thought to be derived from the trading organizations of the Romans and the Syrians.

Especially interesting is the fact that in the East classical traditions continued unbroken at Constantinople, and it is not impossible that Roman gilds may there at least have survived until the very fall of the city, towards the end of the Middle Ages. Certain it is that such gilds are found both under the Byzantine Emperors and in the days of Moslem rule. Mohammed himself is said to have been a member of a merchant gild. The tradition which makes of him the

founder of the *Esnafs,* as the Turkish gilds are called, is accounted for by the same process which ascribed to Numa or to Servius Tullius the institution of the Roman craft gilds, or which attributed to Æsop the fables that centuries before had been familiar to the old Egyptians. All that is needed is a historic nucleus.

The *Esnafs,* as the gilds of Turkey and the various Mussulman tribes are called, were not improbably derived from such early institutions, and popular traditions made bold to trace them back to the days before the flood. Like the classical Christian gilds they acknowledged the need of religion, but showed a true Mohammedan singularity, and at times perversity, in the choice of patrons. Thus to Adam were dedicated the gilds of bakers and tailors, to Noah the shipwrights and carpenters. Cain was the patron of the grave-diggers, Abel of the herdsmen and Nimrod of the smiths, while Mother Eve was patroness of the gild of washerwomen.[1] Enoch was regarded as the first weaver and Seth as the first button-maker and wool-dealer, the inventor of the shirt.[2]

Westward the course of Empire takes its way. Along the same path, by a finely elaborated and seemingly plausible theory, certain writers have attempted to trace the progress of the gilds.

[1] Garnett, "Turkish Life in Town and Country."

[2] Kosta Nikoloff, "*Das Handwerk und Zunftwesen in Bulgarien,*" etc.

What in fact could seem more simple than to map out this uninterrupted course of gild life through more than twenty centuries? Beginning with the days of the Roman King Numa, almost seven hundred years before the Christian era, we would thus trace it down to Augustus; from Augustus to Constantine; from the first Eastern Emperor to the last of the Byzantine monarchs. Finally from Constantinople we should see it spreading throughout the Orient, thence passing over into Lombardy, from Lombardy into Southern France, and from France into Germany and England!

While this may forcibly appeal to the theorist, there is no historic evidence to make the gilds of the Middle Ages essentially dependent upon those of other civilizations. Influences from Roman and Byzantine sources may undoubtedly have been brought to bear upon them, whether directly or indirectly. Yet such influences were not sufficient to account for a system which seemed almost to partake of the universality of the Catholic Church itself, and which differed vastly in its entire spirit from all other forms of gild life which had preceded it.

While the Roman trade-unions during the last centuries of the declining Empire were purely servile organizations, and the Eastern *esnafs* and the trade castes of India remained stagnant, the gilds which arose under the influence of the Catholic Church were a dynamic force. Nowhere perhaps

was that freedom and spirit of brotherhood, which the Church has come to bring to mankind, better illustrated than in these gilds at the period of their most ideal development. They were the natural flowering of her teachings by which alone labor was truly honored and sanctified. Under her inspiration nobles and captains, princes and rulers laid aside their robes of state and shining armor to don the poor patched habit of the monk. To the great Religious Order of the Benedictines, in particular, as we have seen, the civilization of barbarous nations was due. They drained the marshes and cultivated the arid land; they cleared the forests which were still the lurking places of wild beasts and more savage men; they tutored the fierce minds of the barbarian hordes, and with solemn chant and holy word raised up men's hearts to God. Beneath their labors the waste wilderness became fertile with the benediction of golden harvests and the desert bloomed into an Eden of beauty. Soon hamlet and town arose about the monastery wall, and God was glorified throughout the land. Amid such influences many of the gilds of the Middle Ages took their origin.

So intimate indeed was the relation between the Church and organized labor, and so interfused were the religious and economic purposes of the labor gilds that it is almost impossible to classify them. "The religious element," writes Gross, "a potent factor in the history of gilds

from their birth to their final extinction, is an almost insurmountable obstacle to their logical classification; for, as Wilda rightly observes, every gild comprehended within itself a religious one." [3]

While the relation of the gilds with the Church is unquestionable, both as regards their origin and their development, an outline must at least be given here of the theory which would seek to trace them back to the old pagan sacrificial feasts of the nations among whom the early missionaries labored.

The old Teutonic root of the word *gild* has two distinct meanings. It signified " to pay " and also " to sacrifice." The word, therefore, in its first meaning, might readily have been derived from the contributions, or " payments," which have always been an essential part of the gild statutes in every age. *Geld* in German still retains this root meaning, and is the exact equivalent of our modern English word " money " for the Anglo-Saxon *gild*.

Writers, however, who insist mainly upon the sacrificial character of the first gilds naturally accept only the derivation which confirms their own theory. According to Brentano, one of the foremost champions of this view, *gild* meant originally the sacrificial meal made up of common contributions; then a social banquet in general; and lastly a society.

[3] Charles Gross, "The Gild Merchant," I, p. 176.

Christianity — to sum up this theory in brief — had not come to banish the cheer of life, but to hallow it. The old feasts were therefore still retained as paganism gradually disappeared. But Christ was worshiped and His saints were honored in place of the idolatrous homage which had once prevailed. The banquets formerly held in connection with superstitious sacrifices were now opened with Christian prayers. The virtues of the Gospel expelled the vices of the pagan orgies. The Church in fine retained, and elevated to a higher sphere, whatever elements of brotherhood and mutual helpfulness had already existed under the old worship of the false gods.

Such an argument may appear plausible. Yet here likewise there is no evidence which forces us to accept it. The banquets which were to become so striking a feature of the Christian gilds had already existed in the gilds of Rome and Greece. With a different spirit they reappeared in the love feasts of apostolic days. They were the natural expression of man's social nature, and like all other indifferent actions could be supernaturalized by religious motives. While instituted for manifold and specifically various purposes, the medieval gilds were invariably social and religious. Hence they naturally delighted in conviviality, without forgetting the public as well as private duties of worship.

Wilda,[4] one of the earliest authorities upon this subject and a foremost defender of the dual origin of the gilds, attributes them both to the heathen banquets and to the later influence of the Church. Gross, who takes issue with him upon the first part of this theory, fully admits the importance of the second. "However erroneous," he writes, "Wilda's theories may be in detail, he is doubtless right in ascribing to Christianity a prominent part in the inception of the gilds." The Christianity of those days was nothing else than the Catholic Church, the same in her teaching as we know her to-day.

After what has already been said we can dispense ourselves from entering into the evolutionary theories which deduce the gilds from the family. While admitting freely the possibility of many and various modifying influences, such as we have here described, it is sufficient to recur to the needs of human nature and the principles of Christianity as the chief sources from which sprang the medieval gilds.

[4] W. E. Wilda, "*Das Gildenwesen im Mittelalter.*"

CHAPTER XII

MERCHANT GILDS

A NEW epoch in the history of labor opens with the merchant gilds. Seen in their best aspect, they are the first approach towards an adequate expression of industrial democracy that the world had known. To appreciate the progress implied in these early "town gilds" we need but cast a single glance backward into the past.

Far in the distance lies the arid waste of ancient paganism. In the famous cities of classical antiquity the oppression of labor reached its height amid the culmination of art and wealth, while the fair countrysides, that once had been held as the possession of sturdy freeman, were filled with gruesome prison dens whence the branded slaves went forth to toil beneath the lash and till for heartless Roman masters the earth that God had made for all alike. In such a world was sown the great doctrine of human brotherhood. Judaism had never been able to practise it perfectly. Christianity realized it for the first time within its own early community. But bitter and ceaseless to the end was the Church's struggle with Roman vice and heartlessness and greed, though

great and many were the saints she reared. Then came the hurricane of the barbarian invasion laying waste all the earth. One institution alone remained. It was that same Church of Christ which had sought to Christianize the Roman as it now labored to convert and civilize the rude hordes that fell upon him as the scourge of God.

Again amid the new paganism of the barbarian conquerors sprang up the beauty of the Gospel teachings of human brotherhood and the Fatherhood of an all-loving God. The fierce and bloody Wotan disappeared before the fair Christ, born of the lowly virgin and reared in the humble carpenter's shop, Himself the Carpenter of Nazareth. No wonder that with the growing power of the Church labor too should rise into dignity, should develop its new-found freedom and should finally attain to the perfection of industrial democracy in the days when the great Catholic gilds were at length to reach the summit of their usefulness.

With the *gilda mercatoria* — as the first of the new institutions we are now to study was called in the Latin documents of the day — the economic chapter of the medieval labor associations properly begins. Variously known as the gild merchant, merchant gild or town gild, this organization is peculiarly interesting to us from many points of view. It appeals alike to the historian, the lawyer, the social worker, the inquirer into the origin of corporations, the student of munici-

pal government or popular civic activities, and to all who are following the momentous development of economic organizations in our day. Previous societies had been exclusively civic, social and religious in their scope. The new institution embraced all these purposes, although it was predominantly commercial in its nature.

No trace of any merchant gild can be found previous to the records of the Norman Conquest in England. It was in this country that it received its most complete development and exercised a greater influence than in Germany, France or any other European land. A reason for this fact may not improbably have been the comparatively late expansion of industry in England, which made commercial intercourse with the continent peculiarly necessary. Even in the Anglo-Saxon days the merchant who thrice crossed the ocean was raised to the dignity of a thane.

Whatever cause we may assign, it is certain that with the Norman Conquest a new era of commercial and industrial expansion opened up for England. Not only was foreign trade stimulated by the close relation of the Norman merchant with the continent, but a new impulse was given to domestic trade and industry. Probably the first clear reference to a merchant gild is found in a charter granted to the burgesses of Burford by Robert Fitz-Hamon (1087–1107).

The name given to the particular form of asso-

ciation which we are here considering is apt to prove misleading to the modern reader. The term "merchant gild" only vaguely implies the meaning it would convey to-day. It was in reality a labor gild. Each craftsman, at this period, was likewise a merchant. He personally manufactured his wares and personally sold them in the market, at the fair, or in his own shop and home. He not only directly purchased the raw material of his trade, but at times even bartered with it. Thus the brewers of Hamburg are said to have been the principal corn merchants of their city. Similar instances might readily be given in illustration from English history.

All the burgesses, or citizens, of these primitive communities could therefore be members of the merchant gild of their respective town or borough. Since, however, the possession of a *burgage* — the ownership of a town lot, apparently with or without a tenement, according to different regulations — was in some instances at least required for the right of citizenship and of the ballot, there would necessarily be many who could not fulfil this condition. Others again were not strictly resident inhabitants, while lastly there was a large unfree population, known from this time on as *villeins*. In many boroughs members of all these grades could enter the gild. Special clauses in favor of villeins were even to be found in not a few instances. The exclusiveness of later gilds became

more absolute as the town population grew, and the gradual emancipation of the unfree classes filled the cities with men who were often almost on a footing with the free burghers, although still in a nominal state of villeinage.

The merchant gilds were a protection against the feudal lord, and the bondman who had fled from the land was to be recognized as a freeman after he had lived in the town a year and a day. This certainly applied where he held land, paying "scot and lot." But even before the expiration of that time he could be a member of the gild. It is evident therefore how the spirit of industrial democracy was gradually developed by these free institutions.

In illustration we may quote the answer made by the mayor and community of Bedford to the crown attorney who by royal authority had asked to know what inhabitants were admitted into their Merchant Gild. "Both burgesses (i.e., citizens) of the town," they replied, "*and any others dwelling in the same,* from the time that they take the oath to preserve the liberties of the town and the king's peace and to maintain all other privileges touching the aforesaid town and gild, are admitted into the gild, so that they can then sell all kinds of merchandise by retail, and everywhere enjoy the aforesaid immunities and liberties, just as the burgesses themselves." [1] It is evident,

[1] Gross, "The Gild Merchant," I, p. 38.

therefore, that citizenship and gildship were not synonymous, as has often been assumed.

The specific object of the merchant gild is likewise clearly defined in this quotation. It is briefly expressed in the words, "so that they can then sell all kinds of merchandise by retail." While a certain liberty was allowed to foreign merchants in disposing of their goods by wholesale in so far as this could not harm domestic trade, no one except a gildsman might in general deal in retail merchandise without being subject to tolls from which the members of the gild were free. The sale of certain products was moreover strictly a gild monopoly. It is probable however that the necessaries of life were not ordinarily subject to such restrictions.

"No one shall buy anything in the town of Southampton, to sell again in the same town," reads a local gild statute, "unless he be of the Gild Merchant, or of the franchise; and if any one does it and is found guilty, all that he has thus bought shall be forfeited to the King." [2] Even in making purchases the gild merchant of this town was to take precedence over all others who might wish to buy:

> And no simple inhabitant nor stranger shall bargain for nor buy any kind of merchandise coming to the town before burgesses of the Gild Merchant, so long as a gildsman is present and wishes to bargain for or buy it; and if any one does it

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

and is found guilty, that which he buys shall be forfeited to the King.[3]

Thus we read that the abbot of Buckfastleigh, to enjoy the gild privileges of purchase, entered into the following agreement with the citizens of Totnes about the year 1235: "That the said burgesses receive the said abbot and monks into the gild merchant, i. e., that they be allowed to make all purchases like other burgesses, excepting all sales in the name of trade." For this privilege a yearly tollage was paid by the abbot.

To judge fairly of these regulations we must bear in mind that, at least in their best period, the English merchant gilds were generally open to every merchant and craftsman in the town. Even foreign merchants not belonging to the gild might sell their wares at the great fairs and on market days, when the main purchases of the year were made. Merchants of neighboring towns might moreover receive the liberty of the gild, and an interchange of privileges took place. In some charters express mention is made of freedom from toll throughout the realm. It is even believed that this was a general privilege of the merchant gilds.

In every case strict provision was made in the royal charter, or by the town authorities, to protect the gildsmen from the unlicensed competition of non-members or foreigners. The latter title was applied to all who were not townsmen. The

[3] Southampton Gild, A. D. 1327.

isolation of the individual boroughs, the dangers often encountered in passing from one to the other, made the separation between town and town perhaps as great as that which now exists between country and country. Every stranger, though coming from the nearest city, was a "foreigner." The gildsmen therefore could not permit him to carry away at pleasure the wealth of the little community. Many exceptions, as we have already seen, were made in this medieval protective system.

The retail selling of merchandise by non-gildsmen was forbidden, not only within the borough, but likewise within the immediate neighborhood, so that there might be no possibility of circumventing the law. Thus the charter given by Henry II to Oxford lays stress upon the privilege of the merchant gild, "so that no one who is not of the gild shall presume to deal in merchandise either within the city or in the suburbs." [4] Frequently only certain classes of articles are specified as subject to such restrictions.

Although the merchant gilds were therefore, in a wide sense, trading monopolies, they cannot even remotely be compared with the monopolies of our day, or with any that have sprung up since the Reformation. They are essentially different. This is at once evident from the fact that so far from seeking to bring about a concentration of

[4] Stubbs, "Select Charters," 167.

trade in the hands of a few their object was to embrace all who could be considered merchants in any sense of the word, including the craftsmen of the town who formed the overwhelmingly great majority of the original membership.

If, nevertheless, there always remained a number who were not members of the gild, and consequently were excluded from its public privileges, the reason is not difficult to see. It was upon the gildsmen, even though not citizens, that a large portion of the burden of taxation fell. They therefore demanded likewise the advantage of special privileges not to be accorded to strangers and others who had no share in paying the municipal expenses and answering the royal obligations placed upon the town. Such a demand was justified, provided it was not carried to excess. The first duty of the gildsmen was to pay *scot and lot*. This implied that they were to be assessed in proportionate shares whenever money was required not only for public improvements, but likewise to meet the exactions of the king. In the latter case particularly, there was question of forfeiting the dearly bought and jealously guarded franchises of the town itself, should they fail in their duties. The merchant gild therefore was the last resource and the great strength of the municipalities with which it was identified. The town developed and prospered along with it. Not only did the gild pay the imposed taxes, but it often under-

took considerable works for the common good. The municipal welfare and the unsullied reputation of its borough was the main concern of the merchant gild.

That there were likewise serious disadvantages to be dreaded from excessive protection, and from abuses of power, leading to selfishness, need not be insisted upon. Like all purely human institutions, the merchant gilds had their defective side due to mere misjudgment, to faulty social customs and traditions not yet cast aside, or to other human frailties. Even in the most ideal earthly state we shall never be able to ignore the fact of the original fall. Civic injustice and domestic grievances will, to a greater or less extent, always crop up anew owing to human selfishness. Religion alone can successfully attack this evil at its root.

Another vital difference between the merchant gild and modern monopoly lies in the fact that the right of the consumer was constantly kept in sight. The object of the gild was to set a fair price which should be neither exorbitant for the purchaser nor unjust for the tradesman. All trafficking above or below this just standard was certain to bring severe penalties upon the offenders. Heavy fines moreover were imposed for all dishonesty in weight, measure or quantity. The numerous records which remain show that these laws were duly enforced. Here indeed is one of the

first demands made upon the producer in any system of industrial democracy worthy of the name. Both profits and wages must be kept within a reasonable limit that will effectively ward off from the consumer the menace of a high cost of living.

Lastly, all monopoly, such as the term implies at present, was not only strictly forbidden, but stringent regulations were drawn up to make it impossible. No individual or group of individuals could monopolize any product. Attempts to buy up goods, not indeed to control the market — an offense so heinous that it was utterly unimaginable to the mind of the medieval gildsman — but to conduct a larger sale than was possible to others, was likely to meet with instant and absolute confiscation of the goods purchased for this purpose. The genius of the individual was to manifest itself, not by accumulating a vast fortune and by employing the greatest number of men, but by producing the most perfect article for the market. Each gildsman was to earn an honest income. No one was to monopolize or even partially control any industry.

While therefore under the later system of oppressive individualism the merchant gilds were naturally condemned as destructive of free competition, and we may readily concede that their protective measures may at times seem irksome and excessive, they nevertheless prevented the far greater

evils that were to follow under capitalism. These truths are being admitted more freely every day. Even Mr. Henry C. Vedder, Professor of Church History in Crozier Theological Seminary, confesses no less in a volume written the very year of the outbreak of the world war. He says:

> The despised Middle Ages were in many respects, marked by a social justice superior to our own. Society then tried to prevent unfair competition, to give every man a chance in his own rank. Rising capitalism was from the beginning impatient of all such restraints, and insisted that they should be removed, so that competition might be made free and every man find his level. It proved strong enough to carry its point; restraints were removed; competition was without limit. What followed? We have but to look about us and see.[5]

The three great commercial vices against which the merchant gild statutes are directed were then known as "forestalling" or buying articles before they could be offered in the open market on equal terms to all gildsmen; "engrossing," or making large-scale purchases in order to corner any product; and lastly "regrating," or buying goods in order to retail them above the market price. The main objection which can be urged against the merchant gilds is the discrimination against the non-gildsman, the reason for which we have already explained. The civic and national responsibilities and burdens as well as the commercial privileges were equally the share of the

[5] "The Gospel of Jesus and the Problems of Democracy," p. 72.

gildsman, who was ordinarily a laborer, practising his trade and selling his ware upon the market. The non-gildsmen, in the beginning, were mainly, as would appear, the half-free population of the towns whose condition the Rev. J. Malet Lambert, a Protestant divine, holds: "Was in many respects as prosperous, compared with the rest of the population, as that of the artisan class of the present day." [6] We are dealing here with a stage of social development which was the historic status of the time, and which, under the influence of the Church, was constantly developing into a more perfect form of industrial democracy.

A word must here be said of the gild officials. According to the various constitutions each organization was usually presided over by an alderman, steward or master, assisted by two or four wardens or échevins. Sometimes two officials were at the head of the gild. Other special officers were appointed for particular functions, such as provost, sergeant and bailiffs. In later times there existed a council of twelve or twenty-four members who were most influential in the control of the organization. The meetings were known as "morning-talks," and often were simply called "gilds." Social conviviality was of course indispensable for the public gatherings of the gildsmen.

Religion, charity and good fellowship were all carefully provided for within the merchant gild.

[6] "Two Thousand Years of Gild Life," p. 88.

Regulations regarding the appointment of a chaplain, the offering of candles for altar and shrine, the celebration of Masses for the intentions of the gild, the prayers for departed souls and similar ordinances were carefully drawn up and every gild was dedicated to a patron Saint. Sick members were to be visited, those who had fallen into poverty were to be relieved, and daughters dowered for the wedded life or for the convent. Banquets played an important part and often were held on the occasion of business meetings. Even the sick gildsmen who could not attend were remembered, and special portions were set aside and sent to them. So too, according to statute ten of the Southampton merchant gild:

> If a gildsman was in prison in any place in England, in time of peace, the alderman, with the seneschal and one of the échevins, should go at the cost of the gild to procure his deliverance. If any gildsman strike another with his fist and be thereof attained, he should lose his gildship, but might regain the same for 10s. and a new oath. A stranger (with gild privileges) striking a gildsman, to lose his privileges of the gild and go to prison for a day and night; a stranger not of the gild so offending, to be imprisoned (since he had no gild privileges to lose) two days and nights. A gildsman reviling or aspersing another gildsman to be fined 2s., or in default lose his gildship.[7]

Where there is question of delivering or defending a gildsman his innocence is presumed, since gild regulations do not shield the guilty, nor is impunity given to the gildsmen against non-members,

[7] Cornelius Walford, "Gilds," p. 116.

unless a gild should be in its decline, religiously and socially.

What at first glance must strike the reader is the extensive civic power delegated to the merchant gilds. So great was their influence at times that the impression has been created that not infrequently the entire control of the municipal government rested with the town gild. Whatever may be said of various continental gilds it is certain that the English merchant gild was dependent, as such organizations should be, upon the civil authorities and had its vast powers duly delegated from them or even directly from the King himself. The early city charters usually embodied the privilege of establishing such a gild, a privilege eagerly coveted by them, since not only the prosperity of the city but even the development of its constitution was greatly determined by gild influence. The very establishment of a merchant gild was of such significance that legal writers have commonly mistaken it to have been equivalent to municipal incorporation. Such therefore was the status of this important institution during its most flourishing period, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

CHAPTER XIII

A SCOTCH MERCHANT GILD

IN the name of the Lord God, and of the indivisible Trinity, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints, these are the statutes of the Burghers' Gild. Such is the brief but solemn introduction to the code of ordinances drawn up for their merchant gild by the citizens of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Their regulations will admirably serve us as an illustration of the varied interests of these ancient town gilds.

The earliest documentary reference to the Scotch gildry dates back to the reign of David I (1124–1153). From that period onward the gild idea continued to develop. It took its most definite form in the burgh of Berwick, which was a Scotch town until the fourteenth century. Previous to the year 1283 several gilds had coexisted there until the gildsmen conceived the plan of uniting them into one corporate organization. "So that," reads the gild preamble, "where many bodies are found side by side in one place, they may become one and have one will, and in the dealings of one towards another have a strong and hearty love." The new association thus formed was a merchant gild.

The ordinances, we are told, were drawn up by the burghers in the course of two days' deliberations in the year 1283, and three days' deliberations in the year following. They had probably been drafted previously by individuals or committees, who doubtlessly took into consideration many earlier gild regulations. The body of statutes thus approved became a model for subsequent Scotch merchant gilds in other towns. They were in fact of such importance that they were admitted into the early collections of the burghal laws, and may be found in this connection in the work of Cosmo Innes, "Ancient Laws and Customs of the Burghs of Scotland." [1] In our study of this interesting subject, we shall use the translation given in his documentary work on "English Gilds" by Toulmin Smith.[2]

"All separate gilds," the first statute ordains, "heretofore existing in the borough, shall be brought to an end. The goods rightfully belonging to them shall be handed over to this gild. No other gild shall be allowed in the borough. All shall be as members having one head, one in counsel, one body, strong and friendly." We have here in this ideal a reflection of the one supreme reality in the minds of the gildsmen, the unity of head and members in the Catholic Church. The economic object was to eliminate

[1] I, pp. 64–88.

[2] See also Thorpe, "*Diplomatarium Angl.*," pp. 605–617.

destructive competition among the various gilds, whose members evidently agreed to unite their interests and combine their treasuries. Yet there was no question of a monopoly in the hands of a few wealthy merchants.

In the ordinances which follow it is often easy to perceive the influence of Catholicity in the spirit of charity and brotherhood displayed, in the consideration taken of the common good of the community, and in the generous concern for the spiritual welfare of the members. It would be unjust on the other hand to hold the Church accountable for such imperfections and faults as may exist in this or any other gild system. They are due to the shortcomings of human nature and the misconceptions or selfishness of individuals, against which her voice is constantly raised.

Continuing our reading of the statutes, we find that gild brethren making a will are obliged to bequeath a portion of their possessions to the gild, thus providing for the common good of the city and of their fellow members. Women likewise were admitted into the gild, as we may judge from the eighth statute, which places the entrance fee at not less than forty shillings, but exempts from this payment "the sons and *daughters* of gildsmen." If ever the entrance fees of gilds became prohibitive for the general public they had lost their democratic character.

The observance of the Christian law of charity

is duly provided for, first in the mutual respect the brethren are to show each other. Foul words spoken to a gild brother " going to, at, or coming back from the gild meeting " are punishable by a monetary fine. Poverty and human infirmities are carefully relieved. " Whoever shall fall into old age or poverty, or into hopeless sickness, and has no means of his own, shall have such help as the aldermen, dean and brethren of the gild think right, and such as the means of the gild enable to be given." So too, whoever dies without leaving means enough to pay for becoming burial rites " shall be buried at the cost of the gild." He was thus receiving the honors of the gild and not a pauper funeral. What was of even greater importance, his family was not forgotten. " If any brother die, leaving a daughter true and worthy and of good repute, but undowered, the gild shall find her a dower, either in marriage, or in going into a religious house."

Charity, however, was to be tempered by justice. Thus if a brother was charged with serious wrong-doing he was to be helped by three of the gildsmen, and even the charges of the litigation were for a time to be borne by the gild. But " if the brother has been rightly charged," continues the twelfth statute, " he shall be dealt with as the aldermen and brethren think well."

The gild likewise took the place of a modern board of health. Thus it kept up " a proper place

for lepers" outside of the town, and saw to it that fitting alms were bestowed upon them. But, if a leper wilfully forced his way into the borough, thus endangering the city, he met with a somewhat primitive punishment, but no bodily violence was done to him. Another important sanitary measure, which modern municipalities might profitably imitate, was to prevent all unsightly and polluting heaps of rubbish of whatever kind from being piled along the fair banks of the Tweed. Marks were set within which this gild law was strictly enforced under penalty of a fine. Another statute intended for the common welfare of the citizens was to oblige each burgher whose fortune was at least forty pounds to keep a horse worth twenty shillings. If it died he was to procure another within forty days, or pay a fine of eight shillings sterling. Judging from the statutes of a similar English gild it would appear that the purpose may have been to use the horses for drawing water in case of fire, and probably likewise for other civic emergencies and the defense of the town.

In imposing its obligations, the gild, as is evident, did not confine itself to its own members. Its charter enabled it to enforce its statutes throughout the entire burghal community. Thus it could ordain, for the sake of peace, that "No burgess shall get an outsider to plead for him against a neighbor, under penalty of a cask of

wine." The purely economic regulations of the gild show best how far-reaching its power was.

Unemployment was to be carefully avoided. So, to keep the town millers in work, the nineteenth statute ordains: "No one shall grind wheat or other grain in hand-mills unless through urgent need. The miller must have his share,—the thirteenth part for grain and the twenty-fourth part for malt." In the same manner the butcher is not to deal in wool or hides, "unless he would abjure his ax and not lay hands upon beasts." He is to carry on his own trade and not interfere with the trade of another man. The price, however, of the meat is fixed for the different seasons. "Mutton shall not be sold from Easter to Whitsuntide at dearer than sixteen pence the carcass, from Whitsuntide to the feast of St. James at dearer than twelve pence, thence to Michaelmas at dearer than ten pence, thence to Easter at dearer than eight pence. Whoever breaks this assize shall pay a fine of eight shillings." In the same way the price of ale was graded, and the ale-wives were to be registered.

Very little is said expressly of gild monopoly. Statute twenty is an exception: "No one, not being a brother of the gild, shall buy wool, hides or skins to sell again, or shall cut cloths, save stranger-merchants in course of trade."

Most important, however, are the regulations drawn up in order to prevent any individual from

acquiring excessive wealth, or from controlling even the smallest section of the market.

Any brother of the gild advancing money to a stranger-merchant, and sharing profits thereon, shall be fined forty shillings the first, the second and the third time. If it be done a fourth time he shall be put out of the gild. And in the same way shall any brother be punished who takes money from a stranger-merchant for such kind of trade.

Married women could not buy wool, since the husband would thus be able to carry a double stock. For the same reason it was ordained that no citizen could have more than one buyer of wool and hides. The fine for thus attempting to create a little private corner was very severe. "Whosoever unreasonably ingrosses such goods out of the market shall forfeit them to the gild, and pay a fine of eight shillings."

No one was to be able to buy up more than a limited amount of raw material to carry on his trade. In this way no one could deprive others of their opportunities. "No woman shall buy (at one time) more than a chaldron of oats for making beer to sell." So again, "No one shall have more than two pair of mill-stones." Live and let live, was the rule. If more labor was required in such a method of production there was likewise far more joy in the performance of the work. Methods of production, we must remember, were far different from those employed to-day.

Particularly interesting are the regulations

which made the sharing of large purchases an obligation in this as in other early gilds. "Whoever buys a lot of herrings shall share them, at cost price, with the neighbors present at the buying. Any one not present and wanting some shall pay to the buyer twelve pence profit." To prevent such sharing from becoming excessive another statute ordains that, "No brother of the gild ought to go shares with another in less than a half quarter of skins, half a dicker of hides, and two stones of wool."

Of greatest importance, however, are the provisions made for the common good of all the citizens. Thus forestalling the market is guarded against in every way. The goods brought by trading vessels, and all "sea-borne articles of food" in particular, are to be sold only at a certain place or under certain conditions, to give all an equal opportunity of making a fair purchase, and prevent large purchases by individuals. So likewise in regard to all goods brought into the city, the consumer is to have the first choice, and only at a given signal can the middleman buy the remaining articles. "No huckster shall buy fish, hay, oats, cheese, butter, or any things sent to the borough for sale, before the stroke of the bell in the bell-tower of Berefrid. If any one does this, the goods shall be seized, and shall be given to the poor." To prevent, however, the possibility

of any one buying up the goods on the farm before they are brought into the town, or while still on their way to the town, in order to sell them at a profit and raise the price for the consumer, the prudent rule is made: "Goods shall not be bought up before they reach the market. Goods so bought up shall be forfeited to the gild."

These last ordinances in particular we would recommend to all sociological students for their most careful consideration. There is a world of economic wisdom contained in them. After almost a thousand years we are again making our own blundering attempts at what the old gildsmen had solved so satisfactorily. We need above all things to devise methods — suited to our times and conditions — of cheaply conveying the farm products and other articles directly into the city and to the market, so as to give the producer the full value of his labor and the purchaser the full value of his money. Protected by such provisions men will more willingly return to the farm, and the problem of the high cost of living will find its solution — a solution which can be rendered futile only by the excesses in which modern society indulges. A key to the solution is the system of cooperation.

Attention is here called to the special chapter on the middleman in the author's volume, "The World Problem," in which the system of the mer-

chant gilds is contrasted with the modern wasteful methods.[3] There is no question of simply restoring the ancient gilds and blindly copying their methods, but of adapting to our own economic needs the excellent principles, more or less wisely applied in the various medieval gilds, accordingly as the spirit of the Church was able to exert its influence. As Mr. E. T. Raymond says:

> No sensible person will hold that the days of the gilds and the monasteries were the days of a terrestrial paradise. Nobody but a fool would want to go back to the precise ways of those times, any more than a grown person would care to put on a child's jersey and knickerbockers. The point about the Middle Ages is that they did represent vigorous childhood. . . . They were not perfect, but they had nobility, and held the germ of still nobler things.[4]

It is with the aid of the principles suggested to us by the medieval gilds and in the light of their experiences that the modern social order must be reconstructed if it is ever to be safely and sanely established for the procuring of the common good.

[3] Husslein, "The World Problem," pp. 65–74. See also chapters on cooperation: xviii, xix, and xx. The question of cooperation is still more fully developed in the concluding chapters of the present volume.

[4] *Everyman.*

CHAPTER XIV

ECONOMICS, RELIGION AND CHARITY

WHATEVER defects and faults may be ascribed to the merchant gild system, it ever sacredly maintained the great truth, that religion concerns the whole man, and that it may not be disregarded by him in his economic, social and civic activities. Religion is far more than " a private matter," as the old gildsmen well realized. It determines the principles that actuate men in their commercial and industrial relations. With religion removed, there can be no authority to make them seek truth, justice and charity in all their dealings with their fellow-men.

Merchant gilds were less noted than trade gilds for ordinances of a religious character. Examples chosen from them will, therefore, be all the more convincing. They will, likewise, serve to illustrate the relation between religion and social works. The large body of craftsmen and merchants who constituted these organizations seem, in particular, to have had a very special devotion to the Mystery of the Holy Trinity. To this, in fact, many of the merchant gilds were dedicated. We shall confine ourselves in the present chapter

to two such associations, one at Lynn, dedicated to this great Mystery; the other at Coventry, with the Assumption of Our Lady for its patronal feast.

The organization at Lynn dated back to a period prior to the reign of King John; but it was this monarch who granted it by letters patent the privilege of a recognized merchant gild. Its alderman was second only to the mayor in civic importance, and no great municipal work was ever undertaken to which it did not liberally contribute out of its own private funds. The spacious gildhall which it erected in the center of the market place gave distinction to the town. Particularly intimate was the cooperation between its officials and the Bishop.[1]

If now we consider the organization on its spiritual side, we find it no less magnificently provided for. The two sources of information in our possession are the statutes and other ordinances of the gild, and an inventory made at the demand of King Richard II. According to the latter, the gild, out of the income of its lands, goods, chattels and bequests, actually supported thirteen chaplains. Six of these officiated in the church of St. Margaret, four in the chapel of St. Nicholas and three in the chapel of St. James. They were to celebrate Mass daily, and to pray

[1] Richards, "History of Lynn," pp. 458–466; Gross, "The Gild Merchant," II, pp. 151–170. Harrod.

for the intentions of the gild. Never perhaps, except in apostolic days, did men appreciate more highly the value of the Holy Sacrifice. Among the items enumerated in its list of possessions, are "many books, vestments, chalices, and other ornaments for the chaplains of the said gild." Further items of expense were the "wax for lights in the said church and chapels, in the honor and laud of the Holy Trinity" and "torches at the funerals of poor brethren, and so on." If any one of the chaplains should ever fail to give the edification which men might rightfully expect of him, the gild provided that he should be removed, and another, "able and honest," should be appointed in his place. The souls of the gildsmen were thus assured of every possible spiritual benefit and assistance. The zeal of the chaplains was not, of course, to be limited by the duties here described, and even their prayers, according to gild ordinances, were, in particular, to secure the welfare of the entire Kingdom.

The additional usages and customs of the gild indicate the care taken to give instant relief to the soul of a departed gildsman that it might obtain as soon as possible the remission of its temporal punishment and enjoy the eternal vision of God. Immediately upon the death of a brother, the custom prescribes that:

> The alderman shall order solemn Mass to be celebrated for him, at which every brother of the said gild that is in town,

shall make his offering; and further the alderman shall have every chaplain of the said gild, immediately on the death of any brother, to say thirty Masses for the deceased.

The works of charity performed by the gild were in proportion to its religious fervor. Out of the profits derived from the gild possessions of many kinds, liberal alms were yearly given:

Towards the support of the poor brethren of the same gild, to the blind, lame and other distressed persons, to poor clerks keeping school, and poor religious houses as well of men as of women, to the lepers in and about Lenne, and in the repairs and so forth of the parish church and chapels aforesaid, and in the ornaments of the same, together with the alms given to the four orders of friars in Lenne, and to the maintaining of several aqueducts for the use of said town.

Such is the testimony of the writ of inquiry made in the reign of Richard II.

The gildsman, himself, was assured his support no matter what fortune might befall him. "If any brother," reads the fifth of the additional ordinances, "shall become poor and needy, he shall be supported in food and clothing according to his exigency, out of the profits of the lands and tenants, goods and chattels of the said gild." In case of death he was to be "honorably buried" at the expense of the gild. To make sure that no human misery would be overlooked in the town, it was made the sacred duty of the alderman and leading gild officials, "to visit, four times a year, all the infirm, all that are in want, need, poverty,

and to minister and relieve all such out of the alms of the said gild."

In order that the Lynn gild may not be taken as an isolated example, we may briefly summarize the religious characteristics of the similar merchant gild in Coventry. It obtained its charter from Edward III in 1340. Its statutes, written in Old French, may be found to-day among the royal charters. The reasons urged for its establishment were the economic difficulties experienced by its merchants and craftsmen because of the fact that Coventry lies at a considerable distance from the sea.

The first concern of the " brethren and sisters " of the gild was to secure as many chaplains, and therefore as many Masses, as their means permitted, without sacrificing other important objects. Enough money was always to be on hand to provide for any brother or sister who might have fallen into poverty. There was no need of countless sickness, old age, accident and other insurances, since the simple gild ideal was to help a brother whenever and however he might need help. The assistance given was not to be proportioned by the amount he had paid, but by the extent of the charity he might require. Besides attending to the material need of its own brethren and sisters, the gild supported thirty-one men and women who were unable to gain their own livelihood. It furthermore kept a free lodg-

ing house with thirteen beds for poor folk making religious pilgrimages or for any other "works of charity in honor of God and of His Saints." An officer was kept at the house to provide for the wants of the poor and a woman to wash the feet of the pilgrims and perform whatever corporal acts of mercy Christian charity might suggest. On the great gild feast of our Lady's Assumption, all the poor in the care of the gild were newly clad in her honor.

Besides performing all these works the gild was able, at the time of which we write, to support out of the rent of its gild lands, four chaplains. They were to offer Masses and pray for the welfare of the entire Church, of the King and Queen, of the hierarchy and nobility, of all the commonalty of the realm, and for the brethren and sisters of the gild and its benefactors. The latter, as was the custom, had at times bestowed lands and houses upon the gild to increase its annual income, and consequently its possibility for doing good. It was rich, moreover, in precious chalices, vestments and church ornaments.

Not only were Masses to be offered liberally for the departed brethren and sisters, but they were to be given a *memento* by name, in every Mass, for an entire year. Such apparently is the meaning of one of the gild statutes. The names, moreover, were to be written on a tablet and placed at the altar where the Masses were sung. Those

who died in poverty were no less honorably buried, "as becomes a brother or sister of the gild." To preserve the high moral standard of the society no man or woman openly suspected of any shameful sin could be admitted. One who was already a member of the gild was instantly expelled if found guilty.

Religion, therefore, in the minds of the gildsmen, was not a mere humanitarianism, such as is preached by so-called Christian Socialists. It implied a complete compliance with faith, dogma and external worship, as well as a regard for the temporal wants of the neighbor. It was all that Christ wished it to be when He instituted His one, infallible Church. To carry out in our own day the economic, social and civic duties which are implied in the faithful observance of all the teachings of this Church is often difficult in the extreme. It is, therefore, all the more necessary that we look from time to time at the true ideal as we find it expressed, in spite of abuses, in many of the gilds which flourished during the course of the Middle Ages.

Aside from economic gilds, it should here be noted, there were also purely religious and benevolent gilds from which the former not seldom developed. The science of philanthropy was never again to reach the development it attained in the Middle Ages, but it was inspired by religion and therefore became charity because

done in the name of Christ. The charity of the monks was not, as modern ignorance of medieval history often assumes, a mere reckless prodigality. It was truly scientific, providing opportunities of labor to the unemployed as well as affording food and lodging. Above all it remedied the evils of society at their very source as we have never been able to do in our later, self-glorious days. The final test, however, is found in the fact that it was absolutely efficient and effective, so that pauperism was unknown in its time, but at once came into being, like an overwhelming catastrophe, with the passing of the medieval monastery. The same may be said of the charity dispensed by the gilds. This truth must doubtless have become sufficiently apparent, but a brief reference may here be made to two religious gilds, that of the Palmers at Ludlow and the Gild of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Hull. As an instance of scientific charity we here adduce the following statute from the latter:

If it befall that any of the gild, either a brother or an unmarried sister, being young and able to work, has, through mishap, become so poor that help is much needed, there shall be paid to him, out of the goods of the gild, as a free grant for one year, ten shillings, to enable him to follow his own calling in such manner as he thinks best (*ad mercandisandum ad opus suum proprium, prout sibi melius viderit expedire*). And if, owing to weakness or any other cause that may be excused, he is not able to earn back the ten shillings during the first year, he shall be let keep the money during another year. If at the end of the two years he is not able to earn back the ten shillings,

nor to make increase thereupon, nor to live on his own, he may keep the money for yet another year, in order that he may make a profit out of it. If at the end of the third year he is unable to earn back, beyond what is his own, the ten shillings with an increase, then the money shall be wholly released to him.[2]

While unemployment, poverty and beggary were thus scientifically averted in the spirit of Christ, the social evil was similarly warded off by preventive means and Christian love. Here, for example, is a statute from the Palmers' Gild that might be paralleled by countless similar ordinances:

If any good girl of the gild, of marriageable age, cannot have the means found by her father, either to go into a religious house or to marry, whichever she wishes to do, friendly and right help shall be given her, out of our means and our common chest, towards enabling her to do whatever of the two she wishes.[3]

All other material evils were remedied with the same generosity, that looked only to the extent of the suffering to be relieved or the greatness of the danger to be averted. Thus the same gild, which was founded in 1284, gave help in fire, theft, shipwreck or any other mishap, provided only that the members had been actually impoverished. In grievous sickness the brethren and sisters were to be aided until restored to health. "But if any one becomes a leper, or blind, or smitten with any other incurable disorder (which

[2] Joshua Toulmin Smith, "English Gilds," pp. 156, 157.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

God forbid!), we wish that the goods of the gild shall be largely bestowed on him." Nor did the charity of the gildsmen remain at home, though it quite properly began there. Thus the statutes of the Gild of St. Omar in Flanders, existing in the early part of the twelfth century, conclude with the order to remember all the poor and the lepers: *"Postea autem omnes posteros in XP̄O monemus ut pauperum ac leprosorum misereantur."* [4]

That the real progress towards industrial democracy which we find in the merchant gilds on their economic side was due to the Catholic religion rather than to any material cause must be obvious to the intelligent student. In a volume on economic problems, published by the University of Chicago Press, Mr. Walton Hale Hamilton draws the following impartial conclusions in this regard:

> The town was born in an atmosphere saturated with the spirit of medieval Catholicism. Brotherhood and equality had long been preached by the Church. Vertical, or inter-class equality was never realized, either in chivalry or in the Church. But many medieval institutions presented a fair semblance of horizontal, or intra-class equality. It was under the influence of ecclesiastical precedents that the towns established their new organizations. A study of the characteristic features of the gilds shows how great was the number of things to which they were indebted to religious institutions, and how few were the real innovations springing out of the newly created urban

[4] *Mémoires de la Soc. des Antiquaires de la Morinie,* XVII. (Gross.)

life. Influenced by such habits of thought and freed from the obstacles opposed by an already stratified society, the merchant gild legislated with the end in view of placing social interests above class or individual interests.[5]

This last is clearly the supreme ideal to be kept in view in all social organization and legislation. Yet who indeed can fail to realize how far in this particular we have fallen short of the social progress made in the Middle Ages, even at the very beginning of their first economic organizations, the merchant gilds? What was true of them was no less true of all the medieval gilds, even of those whose prime object may seem to have been the acting of mystery plays and the presentation of pageants. They too, as Bishop Stubbs says, were organized for charity and prayer: "It was with this idea that men gave large estates in land to the gilds, which down to the Reformation formed an organized administration of relief." [6]

[5] "Current Economic Problems," p. 24.
[6] "Constitutional History of England," III, p. 648.

CHAPTER XV

A FIFTEENTH CENTURY GILD

THE widespread activity and the great civic power of the old merchant gilds has already been made sufficiently clear. The most authentic sources of information are fortunately available to us in the many gild ordinances that have been preserved among the royal charters and other ancient documents. Like all gild records they are the most precious historic monuments of the life of the people at the period to which they belong. For the student of social problems they are a veritable treasure-trove.

In the present instance we shall select from these scattered documents the statutes of an institution existing at the period when the craft gilds, which we are next to consider, had already attained their full development. While normally the merchant gild was first chartered as the only economic association of the early English towns until the craft gilds arose and finally supplanted it, we here find an institution which draws up new legislation for the various trade organizations of its city that are all gathered in a friendly way be-

neath its ægis. Its ordinances, constitutions and articles, we are informed in the preamble to the gild statutes, were drawn up

> By the kynges commaundement and by the hole assent of the citesens inhabitants in the Cyte of Worcester at their yeld merchant (meeting of their Merchant Gild), holden the Sonday in the feste of the exaltacion of the holy crosse, the yere of the reigne of kynge Edward the fourth, after the conquest the VI.[1]

The institution of the merchant gild had at this period existed in England for four centuries. At the time in question it was already in general supplanted by the trade gilds. In Worcester, as the statutes show, it coexisted with them and finally, by common consent, even legislated for them. It may in fact, in the present instance, be considered as an entirely new institution resembling the old merchant gilds which belonged to an earlier date. The present ordinances therefore embody the result of earlier regulations, while they introduce us to a later and far more complex state of economic development. These facts render them doubly interesting. The original statutes may be found to-day in the archives of the city of Worcester.

To begin with, the shrewd old burgesses well understood the weakness of human nature, and knew how even Judas was tempted while carrying the purse. They did not know of our modern graft and peculation, but they were wisely beforehand

[1] September 14, 1467.

in preventing, as far as possible, the first beginnings of such a condition. Great sums of money constantly came into their treasury and were paid out from it. Their statutes therefore ordained that there should be " a stronge comyn cofur wt VI keyes, to kepe yn ther tresour." These six keys were held respectively by the high bailiff, by one of the aldermen, by the chamberlain chosen " by the grete clothynge " and by another similar official chosen by the commoners. The remaining two keys were then consigned to two " thrifty comyners, trewe sufficiant, and feithfulle men." Collusion between these officials was practically impossible.

The protective measures of the gild were very simple. A distinction was made between " foreyn burgers " and simple strangers. The former dwelled in the city and payed common taxes with the citizens, and consequently enjoyed commercial privileges not granted to mere strangers. Various restrictions however applied to both classes. Thus neither a foreign burgher nor a stranger could buy barley or malt until the town brewers and malt-makers had been served. The gildsmen were ordinarily very definite in their ordinances, and so to avoid possible confusion here, the hour at which purchases might be made by foreign citizens and strangers was set at eleven of the bell in summer and at twelve in the winter season.

For the privilege of standing in the gild hall

strangers were to pay 1d. every market day, and 2d. every fair day. "Also that no manner foreyn (foreigner) sille (sell) no lether in the seid cite, but it be in the yelde (gild) halle of the same, payinge for the custom of every dyker, 1d."

How great the municipal powers of the gild were is evident from the fact that it is ordained in statute 38 that no citizen be put in the common prison, but in one of the chambers of the gild hall, unless he be committed for felony or murder or some other heinous trespass or for a considerable debt. Regulations are likewise made for the police sergeant, who for "attachment of any goods" at the request of a stranger may take 2d. for his fee from a stranger, but nothing from a citizen. The fee he may take from citizens in serving a capias for them under certain circumstances is strictly limited to 2d. Persons under arrest were to be given the choice of three courses by the bailiff. Either they were to accept a reasonable fine, or be amerced by two assessors, or else seek trial before a jury of twelve men. The gild prescribed the qualifications of the jurymen, the duty of the sergeant impanelling the jury and the method of trial.

Not only did it solve the police and the prison problem, but it likewise legislated to prevent unemployment within the city and conducted a very effective employment bureau. Thus no working people from out of town could be employed to the

injury of the workingmen in the town. The method of hiring labor is thus described:

Also it ys ordeyned by this present yelde, that all manner laborers that wolle be hyred wtyn (wish to be hired within) the cyte, that they stonde dayly at Grascroys (at the Gross-Cross) on the werkedays wtyn the seid cite, ther redy to alle persones suche as wolle hyre hem (wish to hire them) to their certeyn labor, for reasonable summes; in the somer season at V of the Belle in the mornynge, and in the wynter season at VI. And that proclamation be made at iiij (four) places assigned, ij times a quarter, by the Belmon (bellman) of the citee.

A considerable labor population had by this time arisen and the gild was concerned in many ways about their welfare. In particular did it legislate against the abuse which was creeping in of paying the workingman in kind. They must be paid in gold or silver, and not by "mercery, vitelle," etc. No butcher was to occupy the craft of a cook, and so deprive the latter of his living. To prevent overproduction on the one hand or an insufficiency of food on the other the wardens of the Bakers Craft were every Saturday to determine the amount of bread that was to be baked during the following week. The same regulations was made for the ale. A special ordinance was made for the tilers:

And that the Tylers of the cite sett no parliament amonge them, to make eny of them to be as a maister, and alle other tylers to be as his seruants and at his commandment, but that euery tyler be ffree to come and go to worche wt every man and citezen, frely as they may accorde, in peyn xx.s. and lesynge

of his ffraunches (losing his franchise) of hym thay be found in defaut.

While considering the interests of the craftsman, the gild never forgot the paramount good of the public. Thus each tyler was obliged to set his mark upon every tile he made, " to that ende, yf it be defective or smalle, that men may remedy of the seid partie, as lawe and reasonne requirith." As often as a man refused to mark a tile he was to pay 20s. into the common treasury. In the same way, to see that the ale was good and fit to drink, two " ale conners of sadd and discrete persones " were appointed on election day to test its quality. The price of the ale was fixed at every law day. Particular care was taken that the " great enquest " which was to decide the price was not made up " to the half partye or more " of brewers. There was, moreover, to be a public measure " to mete ale wt." The consumer could hardly have been better protected. It is in this particular again that our modern organizations, whether of laborers or employers, have much to learn from the medieval gilds.

The merchants likewise were to have their protection. No one was to forestall the market, by selling before the appointed time or out of the appointed place. Buying up large quantities to sell at a high price was prevented. No ale could be sold unless there was a sign at the door, and similarly no inn could be kept except under this

provision. Cases of debt were tried in the gild hall.

The gild provided not only for the work done to-day in a very perfunctory way by a pure food commission, but likewise took the place of the modern health department. All fish were to be examined in the market to see that they were fit to be eaten. Bridges were inspected and repaired. Cleanliness and health were to be guarded by the gild officials. The water near Severn bridge was kept pure. The ordinances contained regulations of every kind for the prevention of fires, and established a mounted bucket brigade. The gildsmen likewise saw to the gates and the town wall, ready to protect their city against any attack, and to fight shoulder to shoulder against a common foe.

The triple institution of craftsmen, journeymen and apprentices was already perfectly developed within the city of Worcester at the period when these statutes were made. The craft gilds likewise were in flourishing condition. All these institutions and organizations, however, were unified by the merchant gild. It prescribed how a craftsman coming into the city could be admitted to his craft and set up his shop, and under what conditions a journeyman from without could receive permission to exercise his trade. In all these cases the individuals were referred to the wardens of the craft gilds and paid their yearly

contributions for the religious pageants and for the candles required on these occasions. The great feast of the gild was the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist.

To obtain burgess (citizenship) rights a payment was required from which the sons of a burgess and every apprentice who had served seven years — the full term of apprenticeship — were excepted. All the above articles and the other ordinances and constitutions were to be "openly redde and declared at euery law day next after the feste of Seynt Michell the Archangelle, yf it be desired."

Institutions more or less similar to the English merchant gilds existed also upon the Continent, but in many cases there was question merely of associations of merchants, in our modern sense of the word and not of town gilds in which all participated. The same is true also of many of the later English merchant gilds, as when we read in the public records of a petition from the Commons to Parliament in the reign of Edward III, printed among their Rolls,[2] that certain wholesale merchants had formed themselves into a gild whose real purpose was not the common good, but to create a monopoly for themselves. In this association we already find the commercial iniquities of modern capitalism clearly foreshadowed. It was called the Grocers' (i. e.,

[2] Rot. Parl. II, 278.

grossers) Gild, because its members "engrossed," or in our modern parlance "cornered," the merchandise upon the market. The complaint of the Commons therefore was:

> That great mischiefs had newly arisen, as well to the King as to the great men and Commons, from the merchants called grocers (grossers), who engrossed all manner of merchandise vendible, and who suddenly raised the prices of such merchandise within the realm, putting to sale, by covin and by ordinances made among themselves, in their own society which they called the fraternity and gild of merchants, such merchandises as were most dear, and keeping in store the others until times of dearth and scarcity.[3]

Here, therefore, we behold the vices which the Church had been successfully combating all these years breaking out anew, until they finally gained complete control under the post-Reformation capitalism when the suppression of her influence in industrial and commercial life had been brought about. Long before this period we can perceive, with the lessening of faith or devotion, the growth of oligarchy and monopoly in England.

Mention of a merchant gild in Paris occurs in a document dating back to the year 1121. In Spain also the merchant gild preceded the craft gild. The oldest known gild record in that country, drawn up under King Alphonso VII (1126–1157), refers to the *confradia* of the merchants of Soria.[4] In Florence the *consules* of the mer-

[3] Rot. Parl. II, 279.

[4] R. Leonard, "*Ueber Handwerkgilden und Verbrüderungen in Spanien.*"

chant gild first appear in 1182 in an original document.[5] Everywhere we can trace the same course of economic development, from agriculture to commercial and then to craft organization. But in England alone do we find the universal development of the merchant gild as a true town organization in its early period, so that by the end of the thirteenth century eighty-two out of 102 English towns had their flourishing merchant gilds. Only later were merchant gilds in England also to become mere gilds of business men, established for foreign commerce or the control of some particular trade within their own town.

In this connection it is important to remember the three meanings, which as C. Gross points out, the word "merchant" implied at three different periods of English history:

> At first it embraced all who, in their trade, were in any way connected with buying and selling, including petty shopkeepers and many handicraftsmen. During the fifteenth and the great part of the sixteenth century it applied preeminently to all who made a business of buying for resale — retailers as well as wholesalers — manual craftsmen not being included. It then came to have its present significance of an extensive dealer. In this conception the old "gild merchant" represents the first stage; the "companies of merchants" the second; the "staplers" and "merchant adventurers" the third.[6]

Merchant staplers were those who, under the

[5] Santini, *"Documenti dell' antica costituzione del Comune di Firenze,* p. 18.

[6] "The Gild Merchant," I, p. 157.

British Administration, exported the principal raw materials after the export trade had passed from the hands of the German Hanse merchants. The staples themselves were specified towns to which these wares had to be brought for sale or exportation. Merchant adventurers constituted a private company whose members held the monopoly of exporting certain manufactured articles. So the word, which at first practically applied to every independent craftsman, finally came to receive its present significance and contains in its various meanings an entire history of social development.

CHAPTER XVI

FIRST CHRISTIAN TRADE UNIONS

THE origin of craft gilds, or Christian trade unions, the most important social institutions of the Middle Ages, and indeed of all history, followed directly upon the development of the merchant gilds. The purpose of these newly arisen organizations of specialized craftsmen was the mutual protection of their members; the promotion of the common industrial and commercial interests of the city as well as of their own fraternity; and the fostering of that spirit of brotherhood, based upon supernatural motives, which was to last through life and continue beyond the shadow of death.

Before approaching this important subject a short review will be in place to trace the various stages of development that finally led to the organization of the free craft gilds.

Agriculture, as we have seen, was almost the universal employment of men during the period of social reconstruction, after the tidal wave of pagan barbarism had swept over the civilization of Europe and the Church began anew her work of Christianizing and civilizing the world. Specialized craftsmen were rare or unknown in com-

munities where each family built its own home, spun its own clothing, and drew its sustenance from the flocks it reared and the crops it planted. There was consequently only a very gradually developing need of them. Over all Europe the religious communities of this period were the centers of economic development as they were the hearths that kept alive the spark of learning beneath the cinders of almost universal destruction. They were in turn to become the first trade schools as previously they had taught the cultivation of the soil to the roaming hordes of barbarians, and in due time were to hold up for their descendants the torch of learning and unseal for them the wisdom of the ages.

It was still, however, a far cry from the first scattered craftsmen, a few of whom might suffice for the growing village communities, and the organized craft gilds which were to play so important a rôle in the life of the Middle Ages. As civilization grew more complex the free craftsmen, where these existed, united with other freemen of their communities into the *frith* or " peace " gilds for the prevention of theft and the preservation of order. In the course of time the merchant gilds arose, particularly in England. Since craftsmen were likewise merchants at this period they were, in the latter country at least, absorbed into these new organizations, in which the great body of burghers were originally united

for the protection of their own and their city's interest and trade.

Often the same men were both the gild and the town officials. Men of the same town might, moreover, still remain under the jurisdiction of their various lords, but when engaged in the occupations of their trade or the sale of the merchandise they had produced they were all members of the same town gild and subject to its regulations only.

It is evident that in none of these stages was there any call for specialized gilds of artisans. But the towns now grew rapidly in population. Economic conditions became more complex. The villeins, or unfree workmen, were fast emancipating themselves. The ranks of free craftsmen were constantly swelling. The merchant gilds, where they existed, no longer sufficed. The time was ripe for a new stage of economic development, and the craft gilds, which answered to the growing need, sprang into being. Soon practically everywhere they had taken their place throughout Christendom.

Prescinding from the unions said to have been organized among the serfs, the beginning of the craft gilds proper may be ascribed to the early part of the twelfth century, although isolated instances can be found even in the preceding century. Thus we read of the victory won, in the year 1032, by the Flemish weavers of Courtrai

in the defense of their city. Mention is made of the weavers of Mayence in 1099. In Paris there is a royal confirmation, in 1162, of the *consuetudines carnificum,* or the statutes of the Butchers' Gild, which itself dates back in its origin to the earliest times. The church of St. Pierre aux Bœufs, on the island to which Paris was then confined, is thought to have taken its name from this gild.

Yet in practically every country the earliest known gilds were the gilds of the weavers. The first craft gilds of England are recorded under the reign of Henry I, 1100–1133. The "Pipe Roll" mentions the weavers' gilds of Oxford, Huntington, Winchester, Lincoln, London; the fullers of Winchester and the cordwainers of Oxford. Material for clothing was everywhere the first great industrial demand.

Other trade gilds followed in rapid succession and gradually obtained official recognition from the Government or the King. In 1130 the English gilds of weavers at London, Lincoln and Oxford were making their annual remittance to the royal treasury in return for their official recognition. The possibility of levying additional taxes may often have been no slight inducement for granting authorization to the numerous craft gilds that now sprang into existence. Gilds not thus authorized were known as "adulterine." They could not claim the privileges of chartered organ-

izations, though they might be permitted to continue unmolested. The new gilds were the more welcome in as far as they strengthened the authority of the ruling sovereign by weakening the power of the barons. Towards the middle of the fourteenth century the craft gilds, or medieval trade unions, had therefore become a characteristic feature in the industrial life of England.

The unfolding of the craft gilds in England was comparatively normal, and outbreaks of violence were apparently rare. The merchant gilds of each important town, as has been shown, had previously embraced the craftsmen as well as the leading burghers occupied in other pursuits. Gradually, for various reasons, the craftsmen withdrew from this larger gild to form organizations restricted more or less to their own trade. In some cases they may still for a time have remained members of the original gild. Each withdrawal of a craft to form its own union meant a weakening of the merchant gild, whose province was thus ever more and more restricted, since its purpose originally had been the monopoly and control of the municipal trade and toll. As long as the communities were small and the burghers were practically all united in the town gild, the need of craft organizations was not felt, nor were they possible in many cases. As the towns grew in population and the gilds increased in size, it was natural that a division should take place.

The greater and more prosperous the towns the greater also was the division of labor. In smaller boroughs the merchant gild might still remain in all its vigor, but in the larger cities the aggregate of the craft gilds usually took over the functions and the power that had once belonged to the ancient merchant gild, which ceased to be, or continued merely in a nominal state. In some cities its name was still applied as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the entire group of craft gilds. In other instances the latter were fused again into a single body, as in the Worcester gild.

Sooner or later, however, the craft gilds dominated everywhere, each charged with the control of its own branch of industry, under municipal or royal authority. The vague general rule that the merchant gild was prior to the former by an entire century cannot be applied upon the Continent as readily as in England. It was to the latter country alone that we turned to study in detail the systematic development of the merchant gilds. Upon the Continent their appearance was sporadic, while they often differ greatly in their nature and usually were purely associations of business men. The craft gilds, however, though always enjoying their local peculiarities, were sufficiently alike to allow of broad generalization. Their similarity indeed is one of the most remarkable characteristics of the Middle Ages. This fact

is the more striking when we consider the wide separation in space, the difficulty of communication, and the practical isolation of the cities.

How far the English merchant gilds themselves became exclusive, and so necessitated the formation of new organizations, it is difficult to say with certainty. In not a few of the towns weavers and fullers, we know, were denied the rights of free burgess as long as they exercised their trade. As one of the comparatively few instances left on record in England, we may mention the laws set down for the weavers and fullers of certain cities in the London "Book of Customs." All sale of cloth, wholesale and retail, was forbidden these craftsmen, and legislation was enacted that they must not dispose of their wares even outside the town limits, lest they interfere with the trade of the local gild. They were thus permitted to dispose of their cloth to no one except the town merchants. Nor was this their only grievance. Not only was all their work to be done for the "good men" of the town, but they could not even practise their trade itself without obtaining the consent of the former. No merchant or *franke homme* could be brought into court by a weaver or fuller, nor could the latter be summoned as a witness against him.[1] As the gildsmen in such instances had grown in wealth and power their

[1] W. J. Ashley, "An Introduction to English Economic History," Part I, p. 84.

Christian democratic principles had apparently suffered in proportion. A Christian renewal was needed.

Upon the Continent itself the struggle attending the establishment of the new craft gilds was far more severe. Of this we shall speak in the following chapter. A great economic readjustment was taking place over all the earth, and the result was to be the wonderfully organized and firmly established craft-gild system, which was to continue supreme and intact for centuries.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WORLD'S GREATEST LABOR MOVEMENT

THERE is but one parallel in history to the universal unrest of the laboring classes following the World War, and their effective determination to better their economic and social conditions. It is to be found in the rise of the craft gilds upon the Continent. Many epochs of "storm and stress" and various periods of world conquest had preceded this event, but none of these ever profoundly affected the masses of the people or radically altered their conditions of life. During all the centuries of pagan civilization, in the great empires of the ancient world, the laborers as a class might change their masters with the change of rulers and of dynasties, but they could not better their position.

Similarly in modern times the great industrial revolution, which completely transformed the methods of production, left the worker in the most helpless dependence on capital and the machine. The Reformation, as Protestant economists frankly state, had but hastened this result: "The later Lutheran overstress on the rights of the individual," testifies the Rev. Frank Monroe

Crouch in the *Churchman,* " found at least an indirect result in the socio-political philosophy of *laissez-faire,* which, in conjunction with the industrial revolution, brought about the economic conditions that have occasioned widespread revolt during the last century, both in Europe and America." Luther's own remorseless demand for the blood of the warring peasants ended his prestige with labor.[1] So too the French Revolution, though itself partly a labor movement and arising out of the conditions of extreme social oppression then existing, was local in its action, relentlessly cruel, bloody and irreligious in its methods, and terminated in the elevation of a courtezan to the altar of Notre Dame as the goddess of the new liberty. Its final result was the subjection of the masses to the merciless exploitation of capitalism. Stripped of his last right of organization the laborer was now rendered more helpless than before. His lot, indeed, as Pope Leo wrote, was " little better than slavery." [2]

The terrorism of the French Revolution can almost find its counterpart in some of the more recent excesses of Bolshevism. Yet the significance of the labor movement throughout the world in the period following the World War was not to be obscured by these. Unfortunately the injection of the spirit of irreligion again proved it-

[1] Husslein and Reville, " What Luther Taught," chapter VI.
[2] " The Condition of the Working Classes."

self the greatest peril of modern labor, precisely as the Faith of the Middle Ages was the very strength that made possible the winning of the only universal labor victory recorded in all history, a victory achieved with moderation and comparatively few outbreaks of violence, if we consider the universality and thoroughness of its effects. It was in fact to last on unbroken until the coming of a new social era.

Everywhere in the growing medieval towns, from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, we find the gradual banding together of the Catholic freemen into social and religious unions according to their respective crafts. They little realized that they were launching then the world's greatest labor movement. They were in fact organizing the first Christian trade unions to work out in this manner their more complete emancipation, to maintain their industrial and civic independence, to preserve within their own hands, though under proper sanction of legitimate courts and rulers, the control of the various trades on which their livelihood depended, and to establish on a true and Christian foundation the dignity of honest labor. So in the course of time, throughout all Europe, the system of craft gilds came into being. Based on the personal and not the communal ownership of the means of production by the workers, and on their joint control, under proper public authority, of the industries in which they were

engaged and of the marketing of the wares which they produced, the craft gilds were in their origin the ideal democratic solution of the social problem of their age.

But more than this, they stand out in all the history of the world as labor's supreme achievement. Feudalism, curbed by the Church at all times, was fast outliving its period of real social service. The burghers in the small towns were seeking for industrial freedom from their feudal lords. Servile dues were gradually cast off for a single payment or an annual tax, and the right of gild courts, in place of trial before the lord, and of gild-controlled markets was effectively won by them. Charters containing their privileges were granted and respected by the King or lord to whom they rendered their allegiance. So, one by one, their economic and civic rights or privileges were gained and maintained. But the struggle, which by the fourteenth century had practically everywhere been successfully terminated, was not merely directed against oppressive feudal lords, but also against a new form of capitalism that threatened to submerge both labor and the craft gilds.

In England, as we have seen, no real struggle of the craft gilds occurred. The way had been prepared for them by the old merchant or town gild, which had purchased or otherwise obtained charter privileges and protected its members

against the incroachments of feudal lords. Seldom did these old gilds become oppressive. As the democratic institutions of their day they had originally embraced almost all the free burghers of their respective towns. They now merely disappeared or yielded in importance to the new craft gilds that had been formed out of their own membership. In Scotland, however, bitter struggles ensued between the trade unions and the ancient gilds as late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Scotch "gildry" had largely developed into organizations of rich merchants, who continued to retain to a great extent the political control of the burghal councils and could alone be chosen as magistrates.

As early as the twelfth century the *Leges Burgorum* enacted that: "No dyer, butcher or cobbler may be admitted to the Gild Merchant unless he abjures the practice of his trade by his own hands and conducts it only by those serving under him." [3] In the thirteenth century fullers and weavers were apparently excluded, but not the craftsmen as a class. The craft gilds, as such, according to Gross, exercised as yet no political power in the civic community.

It was upon the Continent, however, that the real struggle of these first trade unions in Christian times took place. The emancipation in ever

[3] Cosmo Innes, "Ancient Laws and Customs of the Burghs of Scotland," p. 46, Gross.

greater numbers of the serfs upon the landed estates and their crowding into the cities, together with the natural growth of the latter, naturally resulted in a comparatively large population who lived by the labor of their hands and personally produced the wares which they sold. Many of the ancient gilds, which perhaps had originated as popular democratic associations, now gradually became exclusive, oligarchic and oppressive. Membership was often retained within the same families and extravagant entrance fees were demanded to exclude new applicants. The distinction between rich and poor was daily more marked. Not only did the former obtain control of gild and city, but they soon succeeded in excluding from their organization all who lived by handicraft. Ordinances were enacted denying admission to all who had not relinquished the practice of their trade for at least a year and a day. "Soiled hands" and "blue nails" were specified in various gild statutes of different countries as badges of toil debarring a citizen from gild communion.[4] Yet without the privileges accorded by gild membership it was impossible for him to compete with the richer merchants in the profitable exercise of his chosen trade. He would therefore be obliged to labor for them. Not the common good, but their own profit was the end in

[4] Brentano, Wilda, Herbert, etc.

view. Such was the menace of medieval capitalism.

There had arisen against the craftsman a joint conspiracy of the nobility of the land and the aristocracy of wealth. Taking account of altered circumstances of time and place, conditions were not so very different from those created under the post-Reformation capitalism of modern times. Just as the chains of the old bondage of villeinage or serfdom were being broken there arose the danger that new ones would be forged to bind the freeman. The laborer was often compelled by necessity to place himself under the protection of a patrician, to render him service and pay him taxes. At times the old merchant families and the nobility, who controlled the city, assumed the administration for themselves and threw the burdens upon the craftsmen, who were held in equal disrespect by both.

The oppression of the craftsmen was particularly aggravated at Cologne, where the Bishop sided with the weavers against the patrician element. On November 21, 1371, the execution of thirty-three weavers took place in this city and 1,800 men, according to Brentano, were exiled with their wives and children.[5] The fact that on this occasion the churches and monasteries were

[5] Lujo Brentano, "History and Development of Gilds and the Origin of Trade Unions," pp. 46, 47.

ordered searched indicates upon what side the sympathy of the clergy and religious lay. They were seriously suspected, at all events, of harboring the craftsmen from the violence of their enemies.

If instances of ecclesiastics of religious communities can be adduced that might apparently place the Church in an unfavorable light, all doubt regarding her real attitude must disappear when we consider that the entire gild system, which the craftsmen of these centuries were everywhere constructing, enjoyed not merely the sympathy, but the positive support of the clergy. In all instances the priest was the chaplain of the craft gild, a position which he could not have maintained, universally and invariably as he did, in opposition to the Church. No such opposition was ever expressed by her. On the contrary, the craft gilds grew from suspected institutions into power and influence under the eyes of the priest-chaplain, with the tacit or open sanction of bishops and abbots, and beneath the fostering care of the Church herself. They were as truly religious institutions as economic and social organizations. They sprang up out of the soil of Catholicism and were lovingly hedged in by the Church against all aggression. The error of historians has often been to mistake the individual action of certain interested and perhaps highly worldly prelates for the policy and the spirit of the Church herself.

Nothing could be more unfair. The attitude of the people towards the Church and of the Church towards the people is thus briefly expressed by Dr. Cutts, a non-Catholic authority:

> One reason for the popularity of the Medieval Church was that it has always been the champion of the people, and the friend of the poor. In politics the Church was always on the side of the liberties of the people against the tyranny of the feudal lords.[6]

If now we remember that in England and upon the Continent the most intimate relation had everywhere and at all times existed between gildship and citizenship, that chartering a gild and chartering a city were often identical, and that "gildsmen" and "citizens," though not coextensive, are often practically synonymous in royal decrees, we can understand how the official authorization of the craft gilds was an act which violently conflicted with the interests both of the patrician classes and of the ruling merchant families. It frustrated completely the efforts of the latter to make of their gilds an exclusive oligarchy of wealth while it helped to break the power of the feudal lords and strengthened the national governments. The struggle of the new organizations was for equal rights and equal privileges. New citizens were constantly created through their efforts, outnumbering the old aristocracy. The formal recognition of the craft gilds therefore meant

[6] Quoted, London *Universe*, April 26, 1918.

nothing less than a complete readjustment of civic as well as of economic conditions throughout Europe. Their victory may rightly be considered as one of the most important recorded in history. Yet because it was won without flourish of trumpets and crash of armies and storming of ancient citadels, the historian has often failed to realize that it was of immeasurably greater importance and profounder human interest than all the idle conquests of an Alexander or Napoleon.

The Church had been present at the birth of this vast movement. She had captained it with her priests and religious, to whom the honest craftsmen looked for counsel and for guidance, and in whom he confided with loving reverence and trust. She was present also at the victory and saw that it was tempered with charity as it was animated with the spirit of justice. Rich and poor alike are her children and she has equal care of both; but her predilection, like that of her Divine Master, must always be with the weak and the lowly and those who have most need of her protecting arm.

CHAPTER XVIII

TRUE INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

"BACK to the gilds!" is the cry of our age. Many who, at first blush, might repudiate any such intention are in reality working eagerly to bring about their own gild ideals. Nothing therefore is of greater importance at the present moment than a clear conception of the true nature of the medieval craft gilds, on which, with proper adaptations, every modern program of reconstruction must be based. Aside from some of the early merchant or town gilds, they afford us the only instance of industrial democracy throughout the whole extent of the world's history.

It would be folly to claim for them an absolute perfection. Like all other human institutions, they passed through various stages of development. Our reference here is solely to the period when gildhood was in flower. A great similarity existed among the trade gilds of all the various Catholic countries of the Middle Ages. They everywhere gradually assumed the same forms of industrial organization, but they did not everywhere progress with the same rapidity or

show the same high conceptions of industrial democracy. The period during which gildhood may be said to have arrived at its full flowering time began in some countries with the thirteenth century, and lasted until the close of the fifteenth. Craft gilds however existed, as we have seen, at an even earlier period and continued until a considerably later date, not seldom maintaining themselves in a more or less prosperous condition. Thus at Arles there was a College of Heads of Crafts in the twelfth century, but only in the thirteenth century were the gilds fully organized. The legislation then drawn up remained in its essentials until 1791.[1]

" Crafts " and " misteries," are the names ordinarily given to these institutions by the English craftsmen. The latter name is derived from the Latin *ministerium,* meaning a service or office in which any one is engaged. The two words are not infrequently used together, so that we read of the founding of a " craft and mistery." The word " gild " itself continued in use from the earliest days, but is general in its application and applies to organizations of every kind. The French name corresponding to our " craft gild " is *métier,* the Italian *arte* and the German *Zunft.*

The craft gilds were not established for the sake of creating an exclusive trade monopoly.

[1] Etiénne Martin Saint-Leon, "*Histoire Des Corporations de Métiers,*" pp. 62, 63.

Every craftsman was welcomed, and even urged to join his own craft gild. Their purpose was to include within each association all the approved workmen employed in the same trade within the same town. The number of these gilds increased with the constantly increasing specialization of the crafts themselves, until finally almost every industry was divided into a variety of gilds. There was a period when this separation became excessive, but we are speaking of the craft gilds at their perfection. Their prime object was the regulation of trading conditions within their own locality. Hence the necessity of bringing into the gild or including under its economic control every townsman who desired to engage in any organized craft. Instances were not wanting where craft gilds, like our modern federations of labor, extended over entire districts. Thus the great Silesian Tailors' Gild embraced in its jurisdiction no fewer than twenty-five towns.[2] Both the cutlers' and the builders' gilds of Germany were federalized into four central organizations.[3]

Trade monopoly, however, was sought, not for its own sake but as the sole condition under which the gild could effectively exercise the management and supervision of its own craft. In this way only was it possible to legislate regarding the price of raw material as well as of the finished product;

[2] Berlepsch, II, p. 230.

[3] Brentano, "History and Development of Gilds," pp. 70, 71.

to determine the maximum hours of work, the number of apprentices and journeymen that might be engaged by a single master, the years of apprenticeship and the wages of assistants; to inspect in the interest of the consumer the quantity, measure or weight of the product offered for sale; to prevent, in fine, undue competition, excessive wealth or unnecessary poverty. In this way only could the highest standards of workmanship and of morality be secured. No one might be admitted into a craft gild who had not given due evidence of technical skill or whose fair name was sullied in any respect. As W. Cunningham rightly says upon this point:

> The purpose of these gilds was the regulation of work in such fashion that the public might be well served and that the trade might therefore flourish. . . . The effort was to secure satisfactory conditions for production — skilled workers and honest materials — and to ensure a price which should be "reasonable" to receive and therefore reasonable to pay for such ware thus made.[4]

The fact that there might exist, under such a system, a number of "half-taught helpers and unskilled laborers," not included in the membership of any of the craft gilds, does not militate against the purely democratic nature of these associations. True democracy, industrial as well as political, is not a blind leveling process, but a condition of society in which the rights of all are

[4] "The Growth of English Industry and Commerce during the Early and Middle Ages," I, p. 342.

religiously respected, and ample opportunities for economic self-development are offered. The chimerical conception of a society which would obliterate all distinctions is not to be classed as an ideal of democracy but as a mad utopia. It is built up neither on the Gospel of Christ nor on the nature of man. The gilds at their perfection never overlooked the needs and rights of all the classes comprised within the commonwealth. They knew of no class-warfare such as was later to arise. The master workman had attained his full political and economic liberty and did not envy those who might be above him in legal or spiritual authority, nor did he forget the rights of those who, in the same religious spirit, were duly subject to him in his own little workshop. In this happy age, as Professor Seligman says:

> A conflict of interests was unknown. The journeyman always looked forward to the period when he would be admitted to the freedom of the trade. This was as a rule not difficult for an expert workman to attain. No insuperable obstacle was thrown in his path. In fact there was no superabundance of skilled labor at this time. It was a period of supremacy of labor over capital, and the master worked beside the artisan.[5]

The exclusiveness of the gilds was not therefore of the nature of a modern monopoly, since all who would properly qualify themselves, as true men and true workers, might be admitted. When in later years serious economic restrictions

[5] G. R. A. Seligman, "Ten Chapters on the Medieval Guilds of England" (1887).

were introduced, it was merely a sign that the craft gilds, like many of the Continental merchant gilds before them, had arrived at the period of their decline. That abuses might exist at any period is sufficiently obvious. They can nowhere be eliminated. Thus we read of complaints brought as early as 1321 against the London weavers that they were misusing their power by demanding excessive entrance fees for admission to their gild and so unduly limiting the number of licensed workmen.[6] In general, however, a small entrance fee only was exacted. Special taxes were levied as occasion arose. Regular dues were demanded at a later period only. But donations were frequent, bequests were constantly made, and the gilds were always financially well supplied.

The trade monopoly, legally exercised by the craft gilds, was always a great advantage to the town itself. Not seldom the organization of a gild was insisted upon by the municipal authorities in order to secure the proper regulation of production and sale. The reputation, and consequently the prosperity of a town, depended upon the quality of its wares. To maintain this at its highest mark the vigilance of a thoroughly organized craft gild was indispensable. Besides, it saved all the civic expenses that would else be in-

[6] W. J. Ashley, "An Introduction to English Economic History and Theory," II, p. 75.

curred for the citizens by a large corps of municipal and police officials. As a pertinent example we may instance the reasons given for the establishment of the Bristol gild, probably in 1392, which was known as "The Craft of St. John the Baptist and the Craft of Tailors."

The craft of tailors in this honorable town, we are informed in its ordinances, had been and was "greatly slandered in many parts of the realm." The reason given is that any person might practise the craft at that time, though "not skilled in the art of clothing, or not belonging to the business, or one who steals the cloth entrusted to him, to the great slander of the town and craft, and to the danger of the people in default that good ordinance is not made in this town." It is therefore ordained that as in London, in York and in other towns of the realm, "No man of the craft of tailors shall be received into the franchise or freedom of this craft to cut any cloth, unless he be first presented by the master and wardens of the craft to the mayor of this town, as an able and skilful person in his craft." If therefore it could be shown that he was of good condition, good name and full perfect in his trade, he was to be received into the gild. All further responsibility concerning malpractice of any kind in the tailoring business of that town was thenceforth taken by the gild.

To carry into effect the many craft rules regard-

ing quantity and quality of work, prices and hours, purchase, sharing and sale, it is evident that an extensive craft jurisdiction was required. The amount of civic authority and executive power thus delegated to the craft officials varied largely in different countries and at different times. The gilds had their own courts in which members were tried for delinquencies and punished with fines. It is not improbable that in some instances the gild jurisdiction was almost absolute within its own province. Thus the London weavers could insist upon trial before their own court rather than before the civil authorities. Or the process was reversed and the gildsman was directly tried before his own gild court for the violation of gild statutes, but remained at liberty to demand a trial before the mayor. Thus the regulation of an English cutlers' gild, drawn up in 1344, reads: "As to all those of the said trade who do not wish to be tried by the wardens of the trade for the time being, the names of such shall be presented to the mayor and aldermen, and by them shall be judged." [7]

Gild courts were held at regular intervals, presided over by gild officials. A gild sergeant was sent to summon offenders. Thus, unlike many of our modern laws dealing with the interests of industry or commerce, all the gild regulations regarding production, purchase and sale were

[7] Riley, "Memorials of London," p. 218.

strictly carried out with neither the delay nor the expense of our modern systems. The penalties of money imposed were applied to the needs of the association or devoted to the purchase of wax for candles which every gild burned at its shrines or in its churches. Confiscation of articles illegally purchased or produced was also within the gild jurisdiction. Most serious of all punishments, however, was that which expelled a member from the gild, whether for immorality or obdurate violation of laws, and so excluded him from the right to practise his craft in the town as a master craftsman. The statutes in conformity with which these sentences were passed had usually been drawn up by the craftsmen themselves and received the municipal sanction or the seal of some higher authority. They thus rightfully became the law of the city for which the gild was established and contributed their own important share towards promoting the common good of all the inhabitants. They were drawn up with no selfish hand, but in a spirit of fair play for all and thus effectively prevented both profiteering and special privilege, excessive wages or unjust pay, high prices or inadequate returns, careless labor and over-work. How this was brought about we shall consider in another chapter.

The spirit of Christian democracy which permeated many of these early organizations is perhaps best exemplified by the custom introduced in

various French gilds of making their annual change of craft officials during the chanting of the *Magnificat* at the Vespers. "In the middle of the verse, 'He hath set down the mighty from their seat,' the organ and the singing ceased while the past warden left his place and delivered up the insignia of his office. At the conclusion of the verse, 'He hath exalted the humble,' the new warden was conducted to his seat." [8] While the craft gilds continued in this spirit there could be no danger for the safety of the industrial democracy confided to such leaders.

The two following chapters shall present under still other aspects this "True Industrial Democracy" of the Middle Ages.

[8] Abbot Snow, O. S. B., "The Church and Labor," p. 29.

CHAPTER XIX

LIVE AND LET LIVE

M. DENYS-COCHIN, Deputy from Paris, relates in the *Journal Officiel*,[1] how when he was a member of the Board of Aldermen two of his associates in office were Socialist workingmen, rather advanced in years. One of them he describes as of unusual refinement and learning, *un vieillard charmant*. Arguing with him one day the future Deputy said: "You hold that the working class is not fairly treated now-a-days. At what period of history, in your opinion, was the laborer best provided for and had the least reason for complaint?" The Socialist paused for a moment and then said: "Now I know that I'll surprise you, but it seems to me it was at the end of the reign of St. Louis." He had evidently read to advantage the famous "*Livre des Métiers*." [2]

The master craftsman of the Middle Ages was capitalist, laborer, merchant and *entrepreneur* in one. He was none of these exclusively, because

[1] January 19, 1910.

[2] Étienne Boileau, Prévôté of Paris in 1258. The first part of his book is divided into a hundred different titles, each dealing with a gild, *corporation*.

he embraced the functions of them all. He himself bought the raw material of his trade, unless purchased for him by the customer whose orders he fulfilled, made his own wares and personally sold them in his shop or at the fair. The gild did not permit any unnecessary intrusion of a middleman, and so successfully prevented those crying inequalities that were to arise in later days. All were assured of a reasonable competence and no one could shirk the ordinance of labor. But labor itself was then held in honor and not considered an indignity as in the days of ancient or of modern paganism.

Idleness was a vice not tolerated in a gildsman. No craft master might ever work by proxy. Each one, except in case of sickness, was obliged to manage his own small enterprise and lead in the labor of the day. Widows only might employ a substitute. The number of apprentices and assistants whom a single master might engage was strictly limited. This was done in the interest of the apprentices, who else could not receive a proper education; in the interest of the journeymen, who else would compete with child labor; and in the interest of the master craftsman whose shop, however little, might fairly rival that of the wealthiest burgher. If it is true that production was somewhat reduced by these methods, it is certainly true to an even far greater extent that the general happiness and the common

welfare, temporal and spiritual, were greatly increased. To promote this end is after all the object of society.

For this same reason no man might engage in more than a single trade. In the "Secular Reformation" of Emperor Sigismund, 1434, the following law is enacted:

> The crafts have been devised for this purpose, that everybody by them should earn his daily bread, and nobody should interfere with the craft of another By this the world gets rid of its misery, and every one may find his livelihood. If there be one who is a wineman, he shall have to do with this trade, and shall not practise another thing besides. The same shall hold if he is a bread-baker and the like, no craft excepted. And it is to be prevented on Imperial command, and to be fined with forty marks of gold, where it is heard that the Imperial towns do not attend to this, that so nobody of any trade whatever may interfere with the craft of another.[3]

Thus the gild regulation received the support of the Crown. Usually however the gildsmen themselves saw to the fulfilment of their own statutes, at least in the days to which our observations are confined, when gildhood was at its perfection. In pursuance of the same gild principle, that "every one shall have the same means of subsistence," and to procure especially the "better relief and comodytie of the poorer sorte," regulations were carefully drawn up regarding the purchase of raw materials. The producer was

[3] Goldasti, "*Constitutiones Imperiales*," IV, p. 189. Brentano, p. 60.

not to begin the day with the knowledge that he was placed at any disadvantage in competing with a wealthier neighbor. In some of the German crafts the material needed for production was bought for the entire fellowship by gild members appointed for this office. Each gildsman could then supply himself, at a standard price, with the needed quantity of his material, and no one could exceed his allowance.

If special opportunities of a bargain were offered to any individual member he was obliged, according to gild statutes, to give others a portion of his purchase, at the same rate, if so they desired it. Such, too, had been the custom in the early English merchant gilds. To make this effective a special ordinance is even found forbidding him to keep his purchase secret. Thus the poorest gildsman could obtain the material for his craft at the same price and under the same advantages as the richest. On this principle, too, common town purchases were frequently made and even common mills erected where all the wheat must be ground, that " thus the advantage of the poorer sort might be secured." In other instances a trade in cattle and corn was carried on by the town authorities. There are many who in our own day would denounce such actions as Socialistic, although no one had heard in those days of *" Das Capital."* Capitalism itself did not exist on which Marx based his ponderous vol-

umes. In the same manner cooperative selling, as in the case of the German potters, must not be considered a modern innovation.

As for the working time, a six-hour day was never dreamed of by these old gildsmen, unless it might possibly have been the case in some very hazardous or exhausting occupation. The eight-hour day was not unknown. Ordinarily, however, men worked without haste, and with proper intervals for rest and refection, so long as the daylight lasted, content and happy in their occupation. There is no instance on record of any protest, on the part of journeymen or craftsmen, against the length of the working-day, though these old gildsmen were not slow to express their mind on subjects of gild interest. Neither, however, was any one permitted to exceed the definite hours set respectively for winter and for summer work. The object was again to prevent unnecessary competition and to preserve unimpaired the full dignity of man.

The usual hours of labor may at first sight appear long to us, in comparison with modern standards. Yet we may be surprised to learn that one of the objections brought against the Middle Ages is the accusation that there were then too few working hours in the year. It is sufficient to answer that all the necessary work was well and duly done.

The Sundays were sacred to religion, and all

the many Holy Days then enjoined by the Church were strictly enforced by the gild authorities. At six o'clock on Saturdays all industry ceased. In many gilds work ended with the first Vespers, at noon. In some instances this rule was observed not merely on Saturdays but also on the Vigils of the Feasts, which then were many in number. Men might so fittingly prepare themselves for the celebration of the high festivals of that Faith which was dearer far than life to those ancient gildsmen. To it they owed the privileges they possessed and all the honor and the dignity with which labor was encompassed. The master gildsman needed not to envy King or noble. Religion gave to him his accolade, and every apprentice might hope in his good day to be a master. Writing of Chartres Cathedral, where kings and dukes and barons are commemorated among the benefactors, Ouin-Lacroix adds: "*Des corporations de simples artisans y ont mêlé avec orgueil les emblèmes de leur profession.*" [4] The tools of the humblest laborers were not considered unworthy to be emblazoned with crown or coronet on those glorious stained-glass windows of the thirteenth century.

The Socialist Paul Lafargue declared unchallenged before *la Cour d'assises du Nord:* "I say and I maintain, that under the old régime, the

[4] *Histoire des Anciennes Corporations d'Arts et Métiers et des Confréries Religieuses de la Capitale de La Normandie,* pp. 6, 7.

laborer was in a better position than to-day. The Church each year assured him fifty-two Sundays and thirty-eight holidays, a total of ninety days of rest." [5]

Whatever the actual number of Holy Days may really have been, the Church did far more than this for the workingman. She not only assured him the necessary rest and relaxation, but by the attendance at Holy Mass and other religious services kept him constantly in touch with the great spiritual realities of life and thus prevented that degradation of labor which is sure to follow in every pagan society. It was not mere idleness, but a sanctified day of rest that she procured for the humblest apprentice as well as for the master craftsman, and thus preserved in both all that is finest, noblest and highest in man. It is this that the false modern radicalism forgets in its unreasonable demands.

The life of the Middle Ages, in their perfection, was a life of labor, of charity and of religion. But everywhere and throughout, it was a life of joy. In the beauty of so much of the most common workmanship of those days we behold the delight of the workman in his craft. But above all it is plain in the sacred monuments that he has left us of his skill and faith. It is written in every arch and spandrel, in every pinnacle and turret, in the carven tracery and richly varied harmonies

[5] Spoken after *l'affaire de Fourmies.*

of light and shade, in the fantastic gargoyles and grotesques no less than in the reverently sculptured saints and angels of the ancient minsters, where every artisan was gifted with an artist's soul and every artist was an artisan. The same was true of the very homes and shops of those ancient craftsmen. Though we read much in our day of the narrow medieval streets, and the overhanging stories of their houses, crowded together within the high town walls, that naturally could not expand with every growth of the community, yet the richness of medieval life surpassed all that modern science has devised. Cities were then the centers of Christian culture, consisting of real homes, and filled with true men and women who knew that there were higher things in life than frantic production and mad greed for gain. This truth is strongly expressed in the work of two recent authorities upon the subject, J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, who like Ruskin have penetrated beneath the surface of that medieval culture, so rich, so varied, so warm with life and love and faith:

> The old English towns were often over-crowded, insanitary, honey-combed with alleys and courts that never saw the sun or breathed the air, but the fancy, and emotion, and the skill and craftsmanship of different ages had made them beautiful and interesting. They were the home of a race, with all the traditions and pieties and heirlooms of a home. It was of immense moment to the citizens of such towns whether the towns were beautiful, well-governed, and administered with justice and

magnanimity: this mattered much more to them than half the wars that have filled so disproportionate a page in the writings of history.[6]

Comparing the new industrial districts of the age of capitalism with the towns of the medieval gildsmen, the same writers say of the former:

They were not so much towns as barracks: not the refuge of a civilization but the barracks of an industry. This character was stamped on their form and life and government. The medieval town had reflected the minds of centuries and the subtle associations of a living society with a history; these towns reflected the violent enterprise of an hour, the single passion that had thrown street on street in a frantic monotony of disorder. Nobody could read in these shapeless improvisations what Ruskin called "the manly language of a people inspired by resolute and common purpose," for they represented nothing but the avarice of the jerry-builder catering to the avarice of the capitalist.[7]

The Coal Commission of England in 1919 showed that in one town alone 27,000 out of 38,000 people were living in one or two-room houses; in another, twenty-eight per cent of the population was living in houses of one room only. In Lanarkshire, out of 188,000 children born, 22,000 died before they reached the age of one year.[8] But what is all this compared to the slums of modern cities as Francis Thompson knew and pictured them in terrible words, or Tennyson described them in the England of his day:

[6] The Town Laborer," p. 37.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] The London *Universe,* March 21, 1919.

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousands on the street.
There the master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily bread,
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead.

It is with a sense of relief, therefore, that we turn back to those earlier and better days, and with Lowell dare to say: "I am not ashamed to confess a singular sympathy with the Middle Ages." [9] But to understand best the joy of life that filled them, we must turn to the craft gilds of those days: their gild-halls and their richly sculptured churches; their banners, pageants and plays; their feasts and banquets and rejoicings. No gild was ever without its festal gatherings when the hardy craftsmen sat about the common board, and cheer and merriment were universal. There is no gloom in the Catholic religion. It admits of the highest abnegation, but it never seeks to crush in others the life of innocent pleasure. Puritanism and rigorism became possible through the Reformation only. Asceticism itself was not dourness, but joy of spirit. The cup of life was never so full to overflowing, for the greatest and the least, as in those days when gildhood was in flower.

[9] "A Few Bits of Roman Mosaic."

CHAPTER XX

THE GOLDEN RULE APPLIED

THE salient characteristic of the gild ideal was its regard for the interests of the public. However the craftsman might personally fail, the statutes of his gild never overlooked the common good. Here precisely we can discover by contrast the great and fundamental defects of our modern organizations of labor and capital. Social obligations were never so deeply impressed on the minds of men as in the days when religion laid the economic basis for the medieval gilds.

Of first importance was the quality of the work. A false conception of class loyalty is often likely to protect the modern member of an employers' or workmen's association who fails in this or any other regard. Even where flagrant offenses have been committed, such unions in countless instances have sought to shield their members from the just penalties to be inflicted. At times a patent conspiracy exists to promote the class interest at the expense of the public welfare. The medieval gild statutes, at their perfection, never dissociated these two, and the common welfare was in fact the

first to be regarded. Not in vain had the Church imbued the minds of these sturdy gildsmen with the principles of Catholic morality and her own sane interpretation of the Gospel law of social justice and of charity. Hence not only was careful investigation made by every gild into the quality of the goods produced by its own members, but even tools, according to one gild regulation, could not be used "unless the same were testified to be good and honest." Our modern pure food laws were anticipated and carried to a degree of perfection unknown to us. Night work, too, was prohibited for the precise reason that proper inspection was then impossible, frauds might readily be perpetrated and high class work could not be produced by inadequate light.

The purchaser could always appeal to the gild for satisfaction if any article had been imperfectly made, and he might probably find the gild officials even more eager than he to discover and right the wrong. Since the raw material of the tradesman was in many instances furnished by the consumer, special safeguards were provided to assure him that his goods would not be spoiled or wasted. Thus the Bristol craft of tailors ordained that the work must be performed deftly and properly or the gild itself would see that the price paid for the cloth of a misfit garment was refunded to the customer, the garment remaining with the tailor. "So," the gild quaintly incul-

cates its lesson, "every tailor shall be advised to cut well and sufficiently the cloth that is unto him delivered to be cut."

Similarly all frauds in weight, width, measure or any established standard of quantity were promptly adjudged by the gild itself or brought by it to the notice of the municipal authorities. An instance of the latter kind is found in the statutes of the London bracemakers, known as "braelers," drawn up in 1355: "If any one shall be found making false work, let the same work be brought before the mayor and aldermen, and before them let it be adjudged upon as being false or forfeited; and let such person go bodily to prison." [1] It is to be noted that articles defective in measure or weight were then known as "false." Of the gild courts themselves enough has already been said in another chapter. The extent of their power naturally varied in different towns. But all weights and measures were carefully tested, particularly at the great fairs at which alone foreign goods could be bought from foreign producers, although domestic goods, too, were sold on these occasions. The greatest care was doubtless also taken on the fixed market days when the country produce was sold to the townsmen and the work of the craftsmen was bought by the farmers.

The fact that legislation concerning fraud and

[1] Riley, "Memorials of London," p. 278.

deceit was sufficiently common in the Middle Ages is sometimes construed into an argument to prove the existence of a laxity of conscience. The same conclusion is drawn from the number of judgments passed in this matter. The very contrary however would seem to follow. It is only a high conception of rectitude that can insist upon the instant correction of even the lesser offenses that in more recent days were to be almost entirely overlooked, while the most flagrant abuses grew up unchecked under the capitalistic régime in most essential matters. A conscientious use of the pillory, as in the days of the old gildsmen, would have displayed a marvelous rogues' gallery in our public squares before the pure food laws somewhat relieved these conditions. Nor did abuses end with them. We need but refer to the wholesale deceits practised in the war by merchants and manufacturers of all nations. The contrast with the old-time gild regulations will enable us to appreciate better the watchfulness of the gildsmen and the high sense of righteousness exemplified in their gild statutes.

We may in general accept, in this particular regard, the statement made by Stella Kramer in "The English Craft Gilds and the Government," when she thus described their economic activities in the English boroughs:

> As administrators of the land's law they kept control over market regulations for this whole period. They saw that

commodities were made of proper materials and that they conformed to the standards of width, weight and measure. In case of fraud the consumer had redress from the gild tribunal as well as from that of the common law. But proceedings at the latter, for the ordinary breaches of market regulations, must have been rather unsatisfactory. Indeed, appeals on craft matters to any courts other than those of the gilds were probably slow and cumbersome. The gild acted essentially, not as a law-making body, but as an administratory organ interested in the maintenance of certain standards of production and the enforcement of certain rules for market transactions, and its officers were commissioned to bring transgressors to speedy justice. But it could enforce no laws without the approval and cooperation of the local powers. Above the local magnate stood the State, occasionally issuing national regulations, which also the gild took upon itself to execute (p. 137).

The power of gild initiative doubtless differed greatly in various towns, and even much more so in the various countries. It would seem reasonable that gild statutes should not have been given a power of control, which really amounted to civil law, until they had received the sanction of municipal or State authority. It was sufficient that Crown and municipality recognized their importance and fully acknowledged them "as organs in control of every-day market transactions." This the author absolutely admits and adds: "In practice, State, borough and gild presented frequently the appearance of a three-fold combination working together for a common end. It is therefore not always easy to consider the gilds apart as distinct organs with their own special purposes and functions." (p. 143.) This sufficiently illustrates

both the great power of craft gilds and their aim to secure in all things the common good of the entire community and not their own class interests as distinct from this and opposed to it. At their height of development they best illustrate the golden rule reduced to practice. They are the safest and the sanest model of true Christian democracy in the realm of industry.

Of greatest importance was the regulation by the gilds not merely of the process of manufacture, but also of its amount, wherever this was necessary. Thus over-production and unemployment were alike prevented by the wise gildsmen. This was made possible, among other ways, by preventing a surplus of apprentices within any given trade and encouraging a greater number to interest themselves in the crafts that needed development. Other means were employed to avoid temporary over-production while the workers and their families were never starving because of seasons of unemployment.

The problem of woman labor was met with equal wisdom, and woman enjoyed her true place and esteem. Where she chose the function of wife and mother the gild enabled her to perform it in all its perfection. So there was work and bread for all.

To prevent underselling or unfair competition and at the same time to protect both the consumer and the producer, prices too were strictly regu-

lated. The method was simplicity itself. A fair value was set upon the raw material, and a fair reward was assigned for the labor normally required to produce the finished work of craftsmanship. So much and no more the consumer could be reasonably expected to pay. So much and no more the producer could reasonably ask to receive for his work. There was no middleman to absorb the profits. To use improper methods of advertising and to entice away another craftsman's customer was an offense that met with severe punishment. Not in his very dreams could the old gildsmen have conceived of the modern school of advertising when every article made is the best in the market, and all others are inferior in quality or poor imitations, against which a gullible public is solicitously warned by the solemn caution: "Beware of imitations." Honesty and merit were to be the only qualities by which a buyer was to be attracted to the craftsman's little shop. Superior skill in workmanship was to be the one advertisement.

By these methods — which are to be copied in principle, though not literally, by us — prices were kept within the reach of all and the extreme sufferings brought upon modern civilization by the constantly recurring high cost of living were then unknown. Even so prejudiced a writer as Henry Hallam reluctantly makes the following significant admission:

There is one very unpleasing remark which every one who attends to the subject of prices will be induced to make, that the laboring classes, especially those engaged in agriculture, were better provided with the means of subsistence in the reign of Edward III or of Henry IV than they are at present. In the fourteenth century, Sir John Cullum observes, a harvest man had four pence a day, which enabled him in a week to buy a comb of wheat. But to buy a comb of wheat a man must now (1784) work ten or twelve days. (History of Hawsted, p. 228.) So under Henry VI, if meat was at a farthing and a half a pound, which I suppose was about the truth, a laborer earning threepence a day, or eighteen pence a week, could buy a bushel of wheat at six shillings the quarter and twenty-four pounds of meat for his family. A laborer at present, earning twelve shillings a week, can only buy half a bushel of wheat at eighty shillings the quarter, and twelve pounds of meat at sevenpence. . . . After every allowance has been made, I should find it difficult to resist the conclusion that, however the laborer has derived benefit from the cheapness of manufactured commodities and from many inventions of common utility, he is much inferior in ability to support a family to his ancestors three or four centuries ago.[2]

The comparison here applied to the respective periods in which Cullum and Hallam wrote their histories is stated by J. E. T. Rogers to have held true already in the early days of the Reformation. "*The masses of the people,*" as he says in his "History of Agricultural Prices in England" (I, p. 10), "*were losers by the Reformation.*" It became necessary to pass twelve Acts of Parliament between 1541 and 1601 "with the distinct object of providing relief against destitution."

[2] "View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages," II, pp. 814–816. (Appleton.)

But there is still another way in which the Golden Rule was applied by the craft gilds. It would be impossible to enumerate the countless works of charity performed by them. In this particular too there was a wonderful similarity among the gilds of every Catholic country. Craft gilds and more or less purely religious gilds here worked side by side. Not only were comfort and relief generously afforded to poor gild brethren and sisters, sick members visited, the dead religiously buried at the gild expense, and prayers and Masses offered for their souls, but the poor of the entire city were remembered by the gilds, cottages for the old and indigent were erected and charitable institutions of every kind called into being. Thus St. Job's Hospital for small-pox was founded at Hamburg by a gild of fishmongers, shop-keepers and hucksters.[3] Free loans and gifts to those in need or to the young seeking an opportunity for self-support, doweries for indigent girls, assistance to the imprisoned or such as were overtaken by misfortunes of any kind, lodging for pilgrims and the offering of purses to enable them to continue their pilgrimages to distant shrines or to the Holy Places — these were some of the many common charities practised by the tradesmen through their crafts and brotherhoods. Roads and bridges were repaired by them, schools supported, churches renewed or entirely built, and splendid

[3] Janssen.

vestments, gloriously illumined missals, jeweled chalices and waxen candles for shrines or services abundantly supplied. In the stately gild-halls, such as were erected by all the more prosperous crafts, the poor were banqueted upon the special religious feast-days of the gilds. There was no want or suffering to which human nature may fall heir that was not relieved in as truly a scientific as a Christian manner by gild and monastery.

The spirit of religion and brotherhood that went hand in hand to form the first and only true industrial democracy of the world's history, embodied in these craft gilds at their perfection, is thus accurately described by Lujo Brentano:

All had particular saints for their patrons, after whom the society was frequently called, and where it was possible, they chose one who had some relation to their trade. They founded Masses, altars, and painted windows in cathedrals; and even at the present day their coats of arms and their gifts range proudly by the side of those of kings and barons. Sometimes individual craft gilds appear to have stood in special relations to a particular church, by virtue of which they had to perform special services and received in turn a special share in all the prayers of the clergy of that church. In later times the craft gilds frequently went in solemn procession to their churches. We find innumerable ordinances also as to the support of the sick and the poor, and to afford a settled asylum for distress the London companies very early built dwellings near their halls. The chief care of the gildsmen was always directed to the welfare of the souls of the dead. Every year a Requiem was sung for all departed gild brothers, when they were all mentioned by name, and on the death of any member special services were

held for his soul and distribution of alms was made to the poor, who in return had to offer up prayers for the dead.[4]

To complete the picture given here of the social and religious service of the gilds it will suffice to quote the words of Dr. Jessop. The gilds, he wrote in the *Nineteenth Century*, referring in general to all these medieval organizations:

> Were benefit clubs, they were saving banks, they were social unions, and, like every other association of the Middle Ages, they were religious bodies, so religious that they were continually building special chapels for themselves, and they had chaplains of their own who received a regular stipend. Frequently they were splendidly provided with magnificent copes and banners and hangings and large store of costly chalices and jeweled service books used on festive occasions in the worship of the gild chapels; and I have never met with the least indication that the gilds were at any moment other than solvent.[5]

In proportion as this spirit of Christian Faith was living and active in the gilds of the Middle Ages did they realize in its fulness the golden rule of the Gospel's precept of brotherly love.

[4] "History and Development of Gilds," pp. 69, 70.

[5] March, 1898.

CHAPTER XXI

LEARNING A TRADE

CONSIDERABLE attention has been given in our day to the problem of apprenticeship. Never was this so perfectly solved as in the days of the medieval crafts. Apprenticeship was one of the wisest and most important gild institutions of the Middle Ages. It was meant to be a religious and moral, as well as an economic schooling for the future craftsman. It was in effect a striking application of the principle of brotherhood and mutual helpfulness everywhere taught by the Church.

No similar institution is known in all preceding history. Individualism was the marked characteristic of ancient paganism as of modern liberalism. In spite of the workingmen's unions which for centuries existed in ancient Greece and Rome there was no systematic attempt at trade education. The task was left to the individual. There was neither joy nor dignity in labor. It was regarded as fit for the slave only. Catholicity restored it to honor, and gave it those high ideals which were first to be fully developed under the ægis of the Church in the Middle Ages.

The rudimentary conceptions of brotherhood which paganism contained, and which were perhaps nowhere more perfectly expressed than in its gild life, were not sufficient to abolish the stigma which rested upon labor. It was only when the Son of God Himself came in the Person of a Laborer, that men recognized the full sacredness of toil and its appointed place in the plan of Providence. Jesus Himself was the Divine Apprentice. The Builder of the universe learned in all obedience the trade of a carpenter in the shop of Joseph, His foster-father.

The first trade schools where the crafts were systematically taught, where apprenticeship and industrial training may be said to have begun, were the monasteries. The monks themselves were the first great master craftsmen. *Ora et labora,* " Labor and pray," was their motto.

With the development of the craft gilds the institution of apprenticeship likewise gradually came into being. It was not at first obligatory and men might be admitted to a gild and the practice of a trade upon the testimony of the craft officials, provided the latter had carefully assured themselves of the proficiency of the candidates. In the course of time this alternative was no longer accepted; but the term of apprenticeship and the conditions under which it was to be made varied largely for the different countries or even for the different trades themselves. An English ordi-

nance of 1261 forbids having an apprentice for less than ten years.[1] This was considerably more than the ordinary period. Soon seven years came to be received as the normal length of apprenticeship in England. "No apprentice shall be received for a less term than seven years," was the London ordinance. A similar rule obtained in France, although the term still varied largely. Five or six years as "prentice" was the Scotch gild law, "and one year for meat and fee."[2] During this time a complete knowledge of the trade was to be acquired.

The temptation might naturally arise to turn apprenticeship into child labor, but this the gild regulations strenuously combated. No one, moreover, was to practise a trade without having first been apprenticed. So the English gild of Leathersellers ordained that: "From henceforth no one shall set any man, child, or woman to work in the trade if such person be not first bound apprentice, and enrolled in the trade." The master's own wife and children might of course be of assistance to him.[3]

In Germany the period of apprenticeship varied from two to six years; but in addition to this

[1] "*Liber Custumarum*," 536.

[2] Bain, "Merchant and Craft Gilds," p. 204.

[3] W. J. Ashley, "English Economic History and Theory," Part II, p. 84.

there was imposed upon the young journeyman, who had just completed his term, the obligation of traveling, and practising his trade abroad. These years of "wandering" were to give him experience and varied knowledge of his craft. They were meant to be the completion of his technical education. This practice, though likewise observed in France, was not known in England. During the term of apprenticeship proper, the remuneration, if any, was frequently insignificant. In many instances it was very slight in the beginning of the term and regularly increased with the years. It was often, however, no more than the equivalent of a modest allowance of pocket money. In some cases the apprentice after concluding his term was to remain with his master for another year at a set wage. Tools, food and other necessaries, often including also clothing of a stipulated kind, were furnished by the master.

Apprenticeship was the novitiate of the craftsman. It was even preceded in many instances by a probation, as we find was the case in Germany where frequently a full month was required for this preliminary test of fitness. The youth to be admitted was moreover to have been born in honest wedlock, for it was not considered befitting that any one should be a master craftsman whose fair name was blemished by even the slightest stain. Everywhere the general principle was re-

ceived that the artisan who would aspire to the dignity of masterhood must hold his reputation as sacred as the honor of a king.

The admission therefore into this gild novitiate was often conducted with the most impressive ceremonies. It took place in the gildhall before the assembled masters, or even in the town hall itself in presence of the public authorities. The apprentice now solemnly pledged himself "to begin his future calling in the name of God, to be obedient, faithful and attentive to his master, and by his moral conduct to render himself worthy of becoming in time a worthy member of the gild and of civil society." [4] His name was then enrolled among the gild apprentices. Such importance was given to this function when the gilds were in their perfection.

The young apprentice now lived in the master's house as a member of the family. He was to be subject to his master in fidelity and obedience as a son to his father, and was to receive a corresponding care and attention in return. Nothing was to be kept secret from him that might further him in his trade. But above all he was to be protected with scrupulous watchfulness, so that, like his Divine Model, he might advance in wisdom and grace as well as in age. His moral conduct and his observance of religious duties were to be foremost in the master's eye. If in any

[4] Huber-Libenau, p. 23.

way he failed he was to be chastised, "so that through the pain of the body the soul may receive good." In the good old days men did not believe in our modern educational principle of sparing the rod and spoiling the child. In France, however, there was a special rule that he must not be beaten by the master's wife. The English statutes require that he be chastised "duly, but not otherwise."

The true spirit of apprenticeship, as inculcated by the Church, is nowhere more beautifully expressed than in the book of "Christian Exhortation":

No trade or profession can succeed honorably unless the apprentice is early taught to fear God, and to be obedient to his master as if he were his father. He must, morning and evening and during his work, beg God's help and protection, for without God he can do nothing; no protection of men is of avail without the protection of God, and often even hurtful to the soul. Every Sunday and holy day he must hear Mass and sermon and read good books. He must be industrious and seek not his own glory, but God's. The honor of his master and of his trade he must also seek, for this is holy, and he may one day be master himself if God wills and he is worthy of it.[5]

The duties of the master are laid down with no less discernment:

The master must not be weak-hearted towards the apprentice, but neither must he be tyrannical nor too exacting, as often happens. The master shall protect the apprentice from railleries, ear-pullings, and abuse from the journeymen. Masters,

[5] Janssen, "History of the German People," II, p. 20.

think of your duties. The apprentice has been entrusted to you by the gild to care for his soul and body according to the laws of God and the corporation. You must account for your apprentice and care for him as if he were your own son. You are not master only to govern and to do masterwork, but also to command yourself as Christianity and your trade require. Remember, masters, you must be an example to your wife and children, to your apprentices and servants.[6]

The gild did not fail, as the historian remarks, to provide the young man with securities against an unworthy master. As the bans are proclaimed before marriage in the Catholic Church, so before an apprentice was committed to a gildsman the question was asked in the full assembly of the craft if any fault could be found with the future master either as a Christian or a craftsman. Again when the term of service was over the apprentice was publicly to bring his charges, if any injustice had been done him, or else "remain forever silent." He was now amid further solemnities freed from his obligations to his former master and furnished with his diploma. His status, however, was not perfect until, in later times, he had been received into the brotherhood of journeymen, a reception which took place amid much merriment, but not unaccompanied by serious admonitions and sage and religious advice.

Like all human institutions the system of apprenticeship was subject to abuses which rapidly accumulated in the days of religious decline and

[6] *Ibid.*

of the Reformation. The term of apprenticeship was at times made unconscionably long, extending in England to as many as twelve years. In France it varied from two to twelve years.[7] In Germany, where the indenture was for a lesser period than in England, the years of "wandering" were often unduly prolonged. They were known to extend even over seven years and more.

Technical skill was evidently not the only object where such conditions prevailed. Care, too, was taken at a later date to exclude those of "villein estate or condition." Attempts were made in the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV to prevent the vast emigration from country to town by legislating that children who had been employed upon the farm until the age of twelve were to remain in that occupation.

Strict limitations were set regarding the number of apprentices that could be employed by a single master. It usually varied, according to the different periods or conditions, from one to three. In later years, with the more complete development of industry and commerce, a certain proportion was to be preserved between the number of apprentices and journeymen. The reason was evident. Apprenticeship was then degenerating into child labor and the adult workingmen were obliged to protest in self-defense. Before this stage had been attained, however, the object of

[7] Boileau, "*Livre des Métiers.*"

limitation had been to provide a good technical training and later to avoid an overcrowding in the various provinces of skilled labor. The true gild idea was that no master should have more apprentices than he could properly "keep, inform, teach and maintain," that he might make of them good craftsmen and excellent Christians.

Towards the end of the reign of Richard II a distinction began to be drawn between the wealthier and the more indigent gilds, the members of the former gaining a political as well as social predominance, and being privileged to wear a special livery.[8] In 1489 we meet with a regulation enacted in London by which the gildsmen "out of clothing," *i. e.*, not wearing liveries, might employ one apprentice and no more, except they had good reason for complaint, while those "of the clothing" might have two apprentices and no more. He who had been warden might have three, and the upper warden, four.[9] These distinctions were henceforth to become more accentuated, and the name of "crafts" and "mysteries" came into common use in place of "gilds."

Another sign of decline was the levying of large fees both upon the entrance to apprenticeship and to mastership. Such abuses, too, reached their climax in the post-Reformation days, while they were unheard of in the period of true gild

[8] William Herbert, "Livery Companies of London," pp. 36, 37.
[9] Williams, "Founders," p. 11.

development. "It was a great matter in former times to give £10 to bind an apprentice," says Stowe, referring even then to the days of the decline, "but in King James I's time they gave £20, £40, £60 and sometimes £100 with an apprentice. But now these prices are vastly enhanced to £500, or £600, or £800." [10] Brentano remarks that reference is probably made here to the Twelve Great Companies.

Finally the famous Statute of Apprentices, drawn up in "the spacious days" of good "Queen Bess," and technically known as "5 Eliz. cap. 4," sought to reinstate the institution of apprenticeship which had then largely fallen into disuse. It was at last to be replaced, under the old name, by pure child labor. The hours of work were fixed by her at twelve, *as a minimum;* but a labor day of fifteen and sixteen hours was not considered unnatural for children in their teens by the new Individualism in which the Reformation culminated on its economic side. Pauperism, which arose at the same time, was to extend its abhorrent effects equally to the unhappy little ones. Says Professor Hayes of Columbia:

> There was a law by which pauper children could be forced to work, and under this law thousands of poor children, five and six years old, were taken from their homes, sent from parish to parish to work in factories, and bought and sold in gangs like slaves. In the factories they were set to work with-

[10] Ed. 1720, p. 329.

out pay, the cheapest of food being all they could earn. If they refused to work irons were put around their ankles, and they were chained to the machine, and at night they were locked up in the sleeping huts. The working day was long — from five or six in the morning until nine or ten at night. Often the children felt their arms ache with fatigue and their eyelids grow heavy with sleep, but they were kept awake by the whip of the overseer. Many of the little children died of over-work, and others were carried off by diseases which were bred by filth, fatigue and insufficient food.[11]

Boys and girls alike were subjected to the same slavery. "Harnessed and chained like dogs to go-carts," as another writer says, "these poor little slaves might be seen half-naked and ill-fed crawling on all fours dragging after them the coal-trucks filled." So hour after hour they made their way through the dark, low tunnels of the coal pits. "But why did not the churches interfere?" asks Father Vaughan. "I am afraid," he is obliged to answer, "that the established Church at the time was on the side of capital. Methodism was all for Quietism, while the Catholic Church had not yet emerged in England from her catacombs. She was hardly allowed to live, let alone to utter." [12] Voices like those of Mrs. Browning were at a later date to arouse the land:

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest;

[11] Carlton J. H. Hayes, "A Political and Social History of Europe," II, pp. 85, 86.

[12] London *Universe*, May 3, 1918.

The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blooming toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.[13]

Anti-slavery orators dilated eloquently upon the miseries of the negroes, while the children of Englishmen at home, as Sir Robert Peel said in 1816, "torn from their beds were compelled to work, at the age of six years, from early morn till late at night, a space of perhaps fifteen or sixteen hours," under the lashes of even more heartless slave-masters. Such was the institution that had replaced the apprenticeship system of the Catholic gilds of the Middle Ages.

The possibility of a system of apprenticeship such as existed in the best days of the medieval gilds is indeed no longer to be realized. But it does not follow that we cannot apply their principles in our own times, by a true craft education, combined with morality and religion. Christian schools are here, as elsewhere, of the highest importance. Unfortunately a vast proportion of the industrial output under capitalism has been such that articles were made merely to sell at the biggest profit. Perfect and durable work was often not even desired. The joy and satisfaction of expert craftsmanship could no longer

[13] "The Cry of the Children."

be realized in the specialized factory work, requiring only a momentary instruction. Entire classes of skilled labor were cast helpless upon the labor market by the invention of new machinery. Yet a wide field remains for the expert and the craftsman. For the rest, we must take modern conditions as we find them and seek to reproduce, so far as we can, the spirit of joy, charity, justice and religion that were found in the crafts when gildhood and brotherhood were still in their perfection. The teachings of Christianity are for all time and can never become obsolete or inapplicable in any rightful system of industry adapted to the existing periods of economic development. Under no circumstances must factory and workshop be permitted to become schools of immorality and irreligion, where heart and intellect alike are perverted and the whole man is degraded to a level that makes him the fit tool of godless agitators and anarchistic revolutionists.

With the conscientiousness of the medieval gildsman we must watch over our youth, preserving for them their true inheritance and opening to them their just opportunities both industrially and religiously. In their program of "Social Reconstruction," the American Bishops thus expressed their attitude towards the particular modern phase of this subject known as vocational training, showing their keen interest no less in the

intellectual than in the religious and physical welfare of the laborer and his children:

The need of industrial or, as it has come to be more generally called, vocational training is now universally acknowledged. In the interest of the nation, as well as in that of the workers themselves, this training should be made substantially universal. While we can not now discuss the subject in any detail, we do wish to set down two general observations. First, the vocational training should be offered in such forms and conditions as not to deprive the children of the working classes of at least the elements of a cultural education. A healthy democracy can not tolerate a purely industrial or trade education for any class of its citizens. We do not want to have the children of the wage earners put into a special class in which they are marked as outside the sphere of opportunities for culture. The second observation is that the system of vocational training should not operate so as to weaken in any degree our parochial schools or any other class of private schools. Indeed, the opportunities of the system should be extended to all qualified private schools on exactly the same basis as to public schools. We want neither class divisions in education nor a State monopoly of education.

The question of education naturally suggests the subject of child labor. Public opinion in the majority of the States of our country has set its face inflexibly aganst the continuous employment of children in industry before the age of 16 years. Within a reasonably short time all of our States, except some stagnant ones, will have laws providing for this reasonable standard.[14]

So, from first to last, has the Catholic Church ever been eager to champion the interests of the working classes, beginning with their earliest education and devoting herself to them unstintedly with all her zeal and love.

[14] January 1, 1819.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FIRST MODERN LABOR CLASS

CRAFTSMEN, apprentices and journeymen formed the triple alliance of labor in the Middle Ages. All these classes did not however spring into being at once, and it was long before they had developed into distinct parts of a complete gild system. Apprenticeship was already becoming a necessary preliminary for mastership while the journeymen were as yet rarely mentioned in the gild statutes. As a class, they may be said to have come into existence during the fourteenth century. The most detailed reference is made to them in the German gild statutes of the middle of this century, at which time they also first appeared in England as a definite body of workers with distinct interests. They were then variously known as yeomen, journeymen, valets or servants. The German *Geselle* and the French *compagnon* express more perfectly the intimate relation of fellowship and family association that existed between master and journeyman.

Of the three grades within the gild system, the journeymen alone corresponded, in a certain degree, to the modern laborer. Yet even this correspondence was vague and entirely wanting in

the beginning, when the journeyman, though laboring for wages under an employer, was really looking forward to the day when he would open his little shop in one of the narrow, winding streets of his own cherished town, and be honored as master gildsman.

The reason for the rise of a journeyman class is obvious. It was not always possible or desirable for the apprentice, upon completing his appointed term, to practise his craft as an independent master. Hence he would often remain for a space of years as an assistant to his former master or to some other craftsman in need of his service. The number of these journeymen was at first comparatively small and their condition one of the closest intimacy with their employers. The journeyman was as the elder son of the family in which he lived and worked. In dress and conduct he was obliged to do honor to the gild, even as the master's wife was to sustain the fair name of his craft by her virtue and decorum. Both journeymen and apprentices were under the protection of the craft gild.

The journeyman, in brief, was looked upon as a member of the household for whose conduct and religious behavior the master was accountable before God. The same responsibility was considered to rest upon the gild itself. Gambling, late hours and worse vices on the part of the journeyman could not therefore be ignored by the mas-

ter, and were strictly guarded against by the gild rules. Disobedience or irreverent behavior were to be seriously punished. Since, at this early period, the journeyman was bound to live beneath the master's roof and was hardly less incorporated into his family than the apprentice himself, it naturally followed that he could not be married. Thus a statute of the Bakers' Gild of Mainz, 1352, reads: "We are agreed that whatsover journeyman marries a housewife is no longer to be kept by his master than his contract lasts. He should then pay for his shop (*er enkeuffe danne den marcket*) and become master." [1]

Such regulations can be readily understood, if we remember, as was already stated, that the journeyman, like the apprentice, was merely in a transitional stage of his career which would last only until he could becomingly provide for a family in a manner to bring honor to himself and credit to his gild. In France such a transitional stage, known as *le compagnonnage,* was made a definite condition for mastership towards the end of the fourteenth century.. The journeyman might, however, freely choose his master and freely make his terms, in so far as these were not regulated by gild statutes. Like the master himself, he might count on gild assistance in his need.[2] The time

[1] Böhmer, *"Beiträge zur Geschichte des Zunftwesens."*

[2] Étienne Martin Saint-Léon, *"Histoire des Corporations de Métiers."*

would soon come when he would marry and become an independent master craftsman. He could then set up his own shop, take his place in the gildhall and be honored in the land, until the insignia of his trade would at last be laid upon his grave, and the prayers of his brethren and the Masses offered for his soul by them would be presented at the Throne of God. Nor would his family be forgotten, if through any misfortune he left them in want, since the charity of the gild would provide for them.

Nowhere perhaps is the Christian spirit of these early gilds more evident than in some of the regulations made by the gild masters for the wages of their assistants. Thus while the master tilers of London, according to the regulations drawn up in 1350, were to receive 5½d. a day during summer, and 4½d. in winter, their journeymen were allowed 3½d. during the longer season and 3d. during the shorter. Considering the additional burdens resting on the master worker, and understanding that both labored equally hard and long, the division of the payment may well be considered adequate. Even better terms were made by the master daubers, to whose 5d. and 4d. corresponded the 3½d. and 3d. of their *garçons* or journeymen.[3] Since the master and his assistants usually worked to the order of their customers, except in seasons of lax trade, provisions were

[3] H. T. Riley, "Memorials of London," p. 251.

often contained in the gild statutes of this period that payment must be made directly to the journeyman by the party engaging his services, and not through the master. By a particular arrangement the Builders of Nürnberg, both masters and journeymen, stood immediately under the city council, were equally independent, and received equal wages.[4] At the head of the stone-masons stood a skilled monk, who drew the plans and supervised the buildings. No difficulties occurred in the cities where these conditions prevailed until the monastery leadership passed into the hands of secular masters. Even then the old traditions were not entirely lost.[5]

But we now come to a period when the number of journeymen was growing larger and capital became of greater consequence. The time arrived when it was not possible for every journeyman to become a master. Such men could obviously no longer remain part of the master's family and must provide their own homes. They alone correspond to the laboring class of later years.[6] Hence the reason for a new form of organization: the journeymen gilds. These arose at the end of the fourteenth century, and under the name of *Gesselenverbände* became well nigh universal in Germany.

[4] Georg Schanz, "*Zur Geschichte der deutschen Gesellen-Verbände*," pp. 67, 68.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] W. J. Ashley, "Introduction to English Economic History," II, pp. 101, 102.

They were wide-spread also throughout France, England and western Europe in general, but the contrast and often the conflict between masters' gilds and journeymen gilds was most marked in Germany. In England these gilds, where they survived, seem finally to have become merely subsidiary organs to the masters' organizations.[7]

When these new institutions first appeared in their full strength the deterioration of the masters' gilds had already begun. The great influx of country population into the towns had helped, economically, to aggravate the situation. The craft gilds themselves were slowly entering upon a policy of exclusiveness. Entrance fees were raised until in later days they often became extravagant. In the meantime comparatively slight fees were exacted from those belonging to the gildsmen's own families. In some instances membership became hereditary. Thus a monopoly might be created by the leading families. Entire classes were excluded by various legislations from even entering upon apprenticeship. Such laws were at times directed by the State itself against the children who had, for a certain period at least, worked upon the farms. Their object was to prevent the depopulation of the agricultural sections. In Germany, France and Scotland the execution of a masterpiece was demanded of the journeyman before he could be admitted to the craft gild.

[7] Gross.

Hence the *chef d'œuvre*.[8] The idea was in itself excellent, but with the decline of the gilds the conditions set were at times such as to make this task not merely difficult, but very costly, while the article produced was often unsaleable. To this was added in Germany the expensive *Meisteressen*, or inauguratory dinner, after the journeyman had completed his prescribed years of traveling and produced his *Meisterstück*.[9]

Such were some of the abuses that arose as the influence of the Church was lessened and her principles of charity and social justice were in part disregarded. The climax was reached with the Reformation and the years that followed. Thus at Strassburg, the center of the new religion, as Schanz recounts, the holidays were cut off, wages instead of being raised between Christmas and St. James's Day were lowered and other restrictions were enacted.[10] Cromwell abolished the feasts of Christmas, Easter, "and other festivals called holidays," as superstitious. The fixed "play days" given later were no adequate substitute.

"The Reformation," says Bruno Schoenlank, a foremost non-Catholic authority upon this subject, "was drawing its social conclusions, the golden age of the laborer was coming to an end,

[8] Étienne Martin Saint-Léon, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

[9] Lugo Brentano, "History and Development of Gilds."

[10] Georg Schanz, *op. cit.*, pp. 56–66.

capitalism began to bestir itself." There was a tightening of the autocracy of the State régime. The free holidays of Catholic times were done away with. Journeymen "were obliged to produce a far greater amount of work, without having their wages raised. They were strained far more than before and were far more intensively exploited." Difficulties of every kind were put in their way that they might not become masters, and their right to marry was unconscionably postponed. Thus according to a decree of October 9, 1613, the pamphlet-maker journeymen were not to marry until they had practiced their trade twelve years without interruption. Any one violating this law was to be "entirely deposed from his trade and might never again be helped to resume it." Finally the silk-weavers' journeymen were commanded by the Nürnberg city council, about 1650, to observe "the fear of God and a fifteen-hour work day." Such was the economic result of the Reformation, as vouched for by Protestant and other non-Catholic authorities.[11]

The journeymen gilds began as religious confraternities, and indeed retained this character even after the Reformation in Catholic sections. In the meantime they were gradually developing economic features and championing the interests of their members. There was at this early period

[11] Bruno Schoenlank, "*Sociale Kämpfe vor 300 Jahren*," pp. 51, 72, 143, 146. (Second Edition.)

no evidence of what might be called a conflict between capital and labor. The number of journeymen who might be employed by any single master was very restricted. Until the day of their absolute decline the craft gilds sought to prevent the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. Hence the number of journeymen that could be engaged by even the most prosperous gildsman was usually restricted to two or three, together with a proportionate number of apprentices. Frequently, in the early statutes, the master was limited to a single servant. No craftsman, at this period, was likely to have more than two journeymen and as many apprentices. Considering the methods of production then employed, such measures did not interfere with the quantity of the output, while they greatly enhanced its quality and absolutely prevented every form of capitalism. Under these conditions apprentices and journeymen could still have every reasonable opportunity of attaining to mastership, and the journeymen gilds were rather religious and social than economic in their nature. Later, however, when the number of apprentices was increased and more capital was consequently required for competition, fewer could attain to economic independence, and even the work itself of the journeymen might be threatened. The worst conditions arose where the craft gilds themselves had lost their religious principles, or failed to put them into practice, and

became capitalistic and exclusive. In proportion as this took place the journeymen gilds became militant organizations and the conflict between the oligarchic merchant gilds of the Continent and the early trade gilds was repeated, but with far less success for the organizations of the journeymen that now really represented the labor class. Although this situation reached its climax after the Reformation, it had already become serious enough in many instances before this time. In France it became necessary, as early as 1456, to insist that masters must personally supervise their shops.[12]

In the beginning, even where conflicts developed, a tolerable understanding existed between masters and journeymen. The old disputes, says Brentano, seemed merely like family disagreements, between parents and children. The situation could not be stated more exactly. Nowhere was there a trace of opposition to the existing system, or of a class struggle, in the Socialistic sense of the word.[13] In most instances a working agreement was gradually arrived at between the journeymen gilds and the masters' organizations. Masters, journeymen and apprentices still worked side by side at the same tasks, sharing the same labors and exchanging their mutual confidences with one

[12] E. Levasseur, "*Histoire des Classes Ouvrières en France*," II, p. 92.

[13] Ashley, Pesch, Schoenlank,, etc.

another. Hence the family spirit that abided among them. So long, indeed, as the principles of their Catholic faith strongly influenced both masters and men it was possible always to effect a reconciliation between the various interests. Thus at Strassburg in 1363 we find a board of arbitration appointed to decide all disputes between masters and journeymen, made up of five members from each of these two classes.[14] Another arrangement, made by the Tailors' Gild at Aschaffenburg, 1527, was the settlement of all difficulties by a commission appointed jointly by the journeymen's gild, the master tailors and the archbishop.[15]

That attempts to suppress the journeymen organizations must have been frequent in the beginning, when their economic demands were first set forth in opposition to their masters, we might well surmise. Thus in London a proclamation was issued by the city authorities in 1383, forbidding all " congregations, covins and conspiracies " on the part of the workmen for fear that they would seek to raise their wages. Four years later three journeymen cordwainers, in the same city, combined with a Friar Preacher to found a fraternity. The latter was to bring their case to the notice of the Pope, but the men were seized

[14] Schanz, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[15] *The Journeyman Barber.* Mss. of gild statutes at Benedictine Monastery, St. Meinrad, Ind.

and confined in Newgate prison before the plan had matured.[16] It shows how here, as at all other times, the Church supported the workingman in his just rights.

In Germany, too, the Church was with the journeymen. The monks of Nürnberg excited the ire of the masters by permitting the secret meetings of the former to be held in their monastery, while the Bishop of Eichstaat championed the cause of the journeymen belonging to the various cutlery trades. In mentioning such instances, Schoenlank with an unconscious bias concluded that such a course must have been to the Church's interest. But alignment with the rich and powerful masters might have far more advanced her cause in a temporal manner. She was following in the footsteps of her Master. So, too, she had been with the crafts in their early trials. It was with the help of the Church only that journeymen gilds were ever formed at all.

After a period of conflicts or strikes, such as now often took place, a working agreement was usually found, or the journeymen gilds, as in England, were gradually brought under the supervision of the craft gilds and various arrangements were made to deal with their grievances. Often they simply ceased to exist and in not a few instances the journeymen were in some way admitted into the masters' gilds, whose wardens or other

[16] Riley, "Memorials," 480, 495.

officers would adjudge their case when brought to the notice of the gild. In England a class of journeymen, as Ashley says, became a permanent part of the gild system and remained so for centuries.[17] In the Council of Keyserberg, on the other hand, we find them established with their own courts and laws. It was in Germany that the journeymen gilds flourished most and gave rise to an entire series of imperial and territorial decrees.[18]

As a typical instance of the claims set forth by these journeymen we may take the following list summarized here from the demands made by the journeymen tailors of Strassburg towards the end of the fifteenth century. They were drawn up in connection with a new set of regulations which the master tailors were seeking to obtain from the city council. The journeymen demanded: (1) the maintenance of the customary fourteen days' trial before entering upon a contract. (2) The maintenance of the fourteen days' wandering, a period of time within which the journeymen as well as the masters were at liberty to dissolve their contract. (3) The continuance of the old custom which permitted the journeyman to provide a substitute to take his place if he desired to leave his occupation, instead of being subject to fine and black-list. (4) The abrogation of the vague rul-

[17] W. J. Ashley, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 101–103.
[18] *Ibid.* Note 163.

ing that journeymen and apprentices must pledge themselves to prevent the master's losses and further his gain, since this might give an opportunity for the latter to dismiss his journeymen without pay. (5) The clarifying of a certain clause regarding the wage-contract. (6) The righting of the disproportion between the wage and the high fine inflicted on the journeymen for absenting themselves from work through idleness. (7) They admit that they are to do no independent work, but are to receive all work through their masters, and they further agree with the latter that no journeyman should do piece-work. (8) They finally demand greater precision in regard to another wage clause which arouses their shrewd suspicion.[19]

The journeymen's headquarters were the inn, or *Herberge,* as it was called in Germany, where organization had progressed exceptionally in this regard. Both masters and journeymen cooperated in this institution. Here the journeymen met, consulted and held their feasts. The *Herbergsvater* found accommodation in the inn for every wandering journeyman. It was the Y. M. C. A., and far more than that, of the later medieval times. Here were listed the names of the masters in need of men. They who applied first were served first, but precedence was given to the master with a smaller number of journey-

[19] Schanz, *op. cit.,* pp. 37–40.

men, so that the old gild principles were still kept in view. Beds, too, and hospital care were provided here for the sick, while traveling journeymen who could not find employment were often paid a sum sufficient to bring them to the next town. The fund for this was jointly contributed by the masters and the journeymen. Similar institutions were conducted by the French *compagnons.*[20]

Shelten, or reviling, was the weapon used by the journeymen gilds. It was a system of black-listing, by which a gild member was not allowed to work for a master or with a journeyman who had been "reviled," until they had atoned for their offense and been restored to favor. So, too, in case of strikes, warning was sent to the journeymen of neighboring towns not to seek employment in the strike center until economic peace had been restored. These strikes were never directed against the existing system, nor even against the hours of work, though the question of holidays was raised and wages at times became a very vital issue. Often however it was merely a matter of gild honor. Such was the famous ten-years' strike of the Colmar baker journeymen, which began with a question of precedence at a Corpus-Christi procession, and ended finally in a complete victory for the journeymen, without a single issue of economics being raised throughout all this

[20] Brentano, etc.

period. It had lasted from 1495 to 1505. Hence the reason for admitting under such circumstances Brentano's happy description of these disagreements in early Catholic times as " family disputes between parents and children."

This condition can best be understood by noting the fact that although abuses existed, yet gild regulations were no less severe in regard to masters than to servants. If the latter were to conduct themselves " properly " and respectfully, the former too were strictly punished by their own gild authorities if they held back the wages of their men. These wages were determined, in England, by the gild or its wardens in a manner which, Ashley remarks, " was fair in itself in so far as the master's own remuneration was fixed by legislative or civic ordinance."

The journeymen gilds, in fine, were, until the Reformation, religious societies, and indeed remained such in Catholic countries. They were established " in honor of Almighty God, His Blessed Mother Mary and all the Saints " or with some similar sacred dedication. They created funds for the lighting of candles before the altars on Feast Days and other occasions. They provided Masses for their dead comrades and solemnly attended the funeral services. They donated precious vestments, chalices and missals, and even built their own chapel, as did the bakers' journeymen at Strassburg with the aid of liberal

donations given them. Special vaults were set aside for their dead in church or monastery, as in Freiburg and Frankfurt. Nor, as we have seen, was Christian charity neglected. They provided beds for the sick in their own inns or founded funds for this purpose in some established hospital. Thus in 1524 the Schaffhausen gild of journeymen smiths gave its entire capital to the *Seelhaus* that every sick journeyman might there be cared for until he was restored to health. A permanent official was appointed to supervise this task. At times the masters' gild itself provided for such needs. "If any serving man of the said trade," reads an ordinance of the Braelers' Gild, "who has behaved himself well and loyally towards his masters whom he served, shall fall sick or be unable to help or maintain himself, he shall be found by the good folks of the said trade until he shall have recovered and be able to maintain himself." [21] At times contributions were made by masters and journeymen to a common foundation that was equivalent to a social insurance fund for sick and disabled journeymen. Thus everywhere the Catholic creed of faith and works was applied in action so far as the influence of the Church extended.

[21] Riley, "Memorials," 277.

CHAPTER XXIII

REVALUATION OF THE MIDDLE AGES

AMONG the most hopeful signs of our time is the changed attitude regarding the Middle Ages. This was brought about by three causes. First came the failure of the capitalistic system. Concentrating the ownership of the means of production in the hands of the few it deprived the millions of any voice, or share in the regulation of what most vitally concerned them. Against the arbitrary use of this tremendous power the minds of men naturally revolted and they reverted to the days preceding the great Industrial Revolution and the Reformation. Here, in the Catholic Middle Ages, they found realized, for the first and last time in history, the ideals of industrial democracy which to them were of far greater importance than any outward forms of government or mere national prosperity that left their own lives unaffected. "To-day," E. T. Raymond wrote in *Everyman,* "the most earnest minds are looking to a revival of the gild system as the only alternative to a new servile State."

But the thunder of the cannons, too, in the great World War helped to recall the fact, which had so long been studiously overlooked, that the highest achievements of human skill and intellect had after all been accomplished in the ages once accounted "dark"; the ages which produced the world's most wonderful art and architecture, its greatest poetry and richest thought; the ages of which Shakespeare was but the lavish heir, spending prodigally the legacy whose full greatness had been attained in Dante and the Angelic Doctor, in Raphael and Michelangelo, in the beauty of Rheims Cathedral and the stateliness of Notre Dame. To quote Ralph Adams Cram:

> It has needed this war to drive men back and beyond the form to the matter itself, and to give them some realization of the singular force and potency and righteousness of an epoch which begins now to show itself as the best man has ever created, and one as well that contains within itself the solution of our manifold and tragical difficulties, and in fact the model whereupon we must rebuild the fabric of a destroyed culture and civilization.[1]

"The great productive scholars of the present day," wrote Lane Cooper in the *Nation* for June 7, 1919, "are medievalists."

Comparable entirely with the supreme triumphs of art and architecture, was the social wisdom displayed in the medieval gilds at their highest stages of perfection. The brush of a Titian or

[1] "The Substance of Gothic," Preface, pp. viii, ix.

the pen of the great Florentine himself never gave expression to a deeper knowledge of human nature than we find reflected in these masterpieces of social thought and experience, transfused with profound religious conviction and touched with an artistry of the spirit that singer and painter have never surpassed.

Lastly there has taken place a revival of historic knowledge. To the long-continued schoolboy repetition and the learned-by-rote recitation of half truths and entire falsehoods regarding the Middle Ages, on the part even of otherwise most reputable authorities, there succeeded a more direct and sympathetic study. Men gradually began to drop the misnomer "dark" applied to those ages of brilliant thought and magnificent achievement. It was an epithet best suited to qualify the mind of the writer who still so sadly misused it. Who knows but at some future period of history men may suggest for our own materialistic centuries the title once so unjustly applied to those ages of vigorous youth and lofty aspiration. To those times the world now wisely reverts for lesson and inspiration. In the third of his articles on "Prospects in English Literature," published in the London *Athenæum,* "Muezzin" thus pictured the modern situation as it was to be more fully revealed in the aftermath of the Great War:

To-day it is the Middle Ages that claim our interest and understanding, for there are signs everywhere that the era in-

augurated by humanism and Protestantism, and carried forward on the two great tidal waves of industrialism and the French Revolution, is already passing away. We have gained much in the way of intellectual freedom, political privileges, and the creature comforts from these changes; but it is beginning to be realized that we have sold a large measure of our birthright for this appetizing mess of pottage. Above all the temple of the human spirit lies in ruins, its altars are overthrown, and the wild asses pasture undisturbed within its walls. And though, as we must, we bring all the appliances of a scientific civilization and the fruits of accumulated knowledge to assist us in the task of reconstruction, we can learn much from the men of the Middle Ages, for they were supreme architects in this manner of building, and the temple they set up lasted a thousand years.[2]

With a new sense of freedom, after the passing of the abhorrent Reformation doctrine of the Divine right of kings, against which the voice of the Church had thundered through the centuries, men can now better realize her services to humanity as the champion in all times of the poor and disinherited. Referring to Cardinal Mercier the New York *Times* believed that it could pay him no higher compliment than simply to pronounce him worthy of the great tradition of his Church, which was the only Church of the Middle Ages. "This valiant priest," it wrote, "recalls the best things in the Middle Ages, when the Church never feared to speak out, at any cost or danger, in behalf of the oppressed." (April 20, 1919.)

We recall the glowing passage in President Wilson's "The New Freedom," describing the

[2] May, 1917, p. 234.

Catholic Church as the perennial fountain-source of the spirit of freedom and democracy throughout the Middle Ages. It was this same spirit which she infused into the gilds, wherever they remained responsive to her teachings and direction. Men even of such extreme views as Hyndman, in his "Historic Basis of Socialism in England," and the Russian anarchist writer, Kropotkin, in his "Mutual Aid a Factor of Evolution," grow eloquent when discoursing upon the Middle Ages. Without understanding the inwardness of the true Catholic devotion to Mary, which never confuses her with Divinity nor hopes for pardon where sin is unatoned and unrepented, Mr. Henry Adams passes into an ecstasy of admiration in his "Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres." Almost at random Ralph Adams Cram [3] covers page after page with references to modern works filled with the deepest appreciation of medievalism. The authors, it is true, are not seldom at fault in their interpretations owing to the want of that Catholic Faith which holds the key to its own past, and is in all its essence the same to-day, as in the days of Dante or the days of the inspired writers of the books of the New Testament, while always admirably adapted to every change of social life the centuries may bring.

Medievalism is the study of a lifetime, for it is that great

[3] "The Substance of Gothic," xiii–xviii.

cycle of five centuries wherein Christianity created for itself a world as nearly as possible made in its own image, a world that in spite of the wars and desecrations, the ignorance and the barbarism and the "restorations" of modernism has left us monuments and records and traditions of a power and beauty and nobility without parallel in history.[4]

It is with the democracy of the Catholic gilds of these ages that we are particularly concerned, and it is interesting to notice how this is recognized to have extended even into the field of education. Besides charity schools, like our modern parochial schools, and largely supported by the gilds, there were also gild schools proper. Our word "university" itself, as the Columbia University professor, James Harvey Robinson, explains, is merely a medieval synonym for gild:

Before the end of the twelfth century the teachers had become so numerous in Paris that they formed a union, or gild, for the advancement of their interests. This union of professors was called by the usual name for corporations in the Middle Ages, *universitas;* hence our word, university. The King and the Pope both favored the university and granted the teachers and students many of the privileges of the clergy.[5]

So during the following centuries numerous universities sprang up in France, Italy and Spain. Oxford and Cambridge were founded and great centers of learning flourished everywhere. University life attained a prominence it has never equaled since. Oxford alone is said to have num-

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] "Medieval and Modern Times," p. 251.

bered about 10,000 students. Other universities are claimed to have numbered even 20,000 and 30,000 students. "Monasteries," says Professor Laurie, "regularly sent boys of thirteen and fourteen to university seats. A Papal instruction of 1335 required every Benedictine and Augustinian community to send boys to the university in the proportion of one in twenty of their residents." [6] Traveling scholars, as the writer adds, were accommodated gratuitously, in the houses of priests or monastery hospitals, and even local subscriptions were offered to help them on their way. Here was a true democracy of learning. Higher education was not confined to the clergy except only when the energy of the Church was necessarily absorbed in the teaching of the very rudiments of civilization and of the first principles of religious life to the races emerging from savagery.

In the establishment of these early seats of learning the influence of the gilds was predominant. Regarding the origin of the three great universities at Paris, Oxford and Bologna, Father Cuthbert is thus quoted in the London *Tablet:*

> They started without charters or even buildings of their own, and were at first simply a group who formed themselves into a closed gild, and borrowed private houses, churches or public halls. Both scholars and masters were subject to gild authority. At Bologna it was a Scholars' Gild which ruled and appointed the authority to which the masters were responsible; but eventually the masters allied themselves with the town authorities,

[6] "The Rise and Early Constitution of the University."

and so the university became subject to the civic power. At Paris and Oxford the Masters' Gild elected the Council and officials who governed the universities. Later on the two gilds combined, that is the gild included both scholars and masters.[7]

Thus these early Catholic universities were in the strictest sense popular and democratic institutions. Later it became the fashion to ask for a Papal or a royal charter. "That given to Oxford in 1214 by the Legate Otho is probably the earliest." These facts are now fully acknowledged by non-Catholic authorities and even the London *Times* was able to launch forth upon a eulogy of the Papacy in the work of elementary and higher education during the entire period of the Middle Ages:

The organization and control of the universities of Europe was an achievement that is a deathless laurel in the Papal crown. In educational matters there was universal confidence in the judgment and justice of the Papacy from the days of Eugenius II in the ninth century to the days of the Counter-Reformation in the sixteenth.

But it was not only in university matters that the educational activity of the Papacy was so remarkable. Whether we regard Canon 34 of the canons promulgated at the *Concilium Romanum* in 826, or the decrees of the Third Lateran Council in 1179, of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, and of other Councils, such as that of Vienna in 1311, we always find that the medieval Church is seeking to advance learning of all grades, and to coordinate educational effort of all kinds. And the efforts of the Central Conference were amply supplemented by what were, in effect, diocesan conferences.[8]

[7] May 3, 1919.
[8] Educational Supplement, Jan. 2, 1919.

The decree of the Third Lateran Council, in 1179, to which the London *Times* refers is itself a complete refutation of the calumnies that, through ignorance, had long been spread against the Church in the Middle Ages. It reads:

> Since the Church of God, like a good mother, is bound to provide so that the poor who can get no help from the wealth of parents should not be deprived of the opportunity of learning and making progress in letters, let a complete benefice be assigned in every cathedral church to a schoolmaster, who will teach clerics and poor scholars for nothing.

The Fourth Lateran Council extended this decree to all countries. By this a perfect system of free public schools was ordained. The democracy of learning as of industry was the natural result of the genuinely democratic spirit of the Catholic Church which has never changed since the Galilean fisherman was made the Rock on which Christ constructed it: "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church." The seal of the Popes is the seal of the Fisherman.

Our revaluation of the Middle Ages is thus steadily progressing and entering into the final stage of popularization through the daily press. Particularly in the field of sociology will these ages be of constantly increasing interest and profoundly practical instruction for our times. That the common workingman was then better provided for than in the days when capitalism reached its climax before the outbreak of the World War, is

now universally acknowledged by all who may be trusted to speak with authority upon this question. The advantages of labor were all secured to it through the potent influence of the gilds, but in particular of the craft gilds as based on the religious principles of the Catholic Church with which they were integrally connected. Separated from her, they were left as a body reft of the soul, lifeless, inefficient, passing slowly into inevitable decay. With their religious spirit intact they might have confidently faced the period of economic reconstruction. This too we find admitted without hesitation.

It was due to the struggle of the craft gilds alone, as was shown in a previous chapter, that the world was not sunk into a state of uncontrolled capitalism half a millennium before the coming of the Industrial Revolution. Through the struggle of the gildsmen the nascent cities, beginning with the eleventh century, won their enfranchisement from the feudal lords who then had too often outlasted their usefulness. In the same way they overcame the formidable power of the merchant corporations that threatened to establish their oligarchy of wealth. So too, through the efforts of the gilds the first modern Christian democracies were formed. Many of the medieval cities grew into independent States. In Italy particularly, sprang up those marvelous Catholic republics, like Genoa, Lucca, Pisa, and Florence.

Thus, in the latter city, the *consules* of the merchant gilds first appear in 1182 and from this time on no important transaction takes place without their cooperation. In Pisa, besides three merchant gilds, there existed after about 1260 a union of seven *artes* or trade gilds consisting respectively of such different elements as notaries, smiths, and wine dealers. They were governed by two *capitanei* chosen in turn from different gilds and seven other officers, one from each gild. The widest autonomy was enjoyed by each organization.[9]

Oligarchy and class-rule, it is true, began again in proportion as the gilds themselves deteriorated in their spirit of religion and democracy, or their influence declined, but their results lived on in the magnificent efflorescence of art stimulated through the powerful incentives offered by the Church. These are some of the facts that now again are receiving their due valuation.

[9] Alfred Doran, "*Entwickelung und Organisation der Florentiner Zünfte im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert.*"

CHAPTER XXIV

CIVIC PAGEANTS AND PLAYS

WE have within recent years witnessed many revivals of medievalism in art and literature. In England Ruskin stood as the leader of this great movement. He had caught as none other the external beauty and splendor of the Middle Ages. As he came to know them better he likewise approached more closely to a love and veneration of the religion that has been the inspiration of everything noblest in life and highest in art. At a greater distance from the shrine stood the modern Pre-Raphaelite school of artists. They might indeed copy the outward form of the art of a Fra Angelico, but could not feel the rapture that inspired it. They lacked the faith and the love. Trammeled by conventions and remote from human sympathies, they could not stir the hearts of men. In our own day we are again approaching medievalism, but in another way. We have caught, however faintly and vaguely, what Ruskin had already sought to teach the world, the spirit of cooperation. It expresses itself in countless, often sadly misleading, ways, in our economic life. But again men fail to understand that there can be no assurance of a

true and lasting universal brotherhood without a universal faith.

Among the latest revivals of medievalism are the civic pageant and drama. The reproduction of "Everyman," in spite of its modern surroundings and professional actors, faintly suggested the force and influence of the Catholic morality plays. Intended not for a select few, but for the religious instruction of all the people, such plays were truly popular in their nature. More ambitious were the first modern attempts once more to suggest by mammoth performances the medieval idea of co-operation in art. Perhaps most successful in this direction was the magnificent Civic Pageant and Masque of St. Louis. Manifestly, however, it is impossible to reproduce artificially in our own times the true spirit of cooperation as it was understood in the days when the great minsters were erected, the work of generations of humble artisans. In spite of private interests there was always one center of Truth in which all were united. Every popular ceremony was full of beauty and symbolism, because religion had given a higher meaning to life. As a characteristic example of a purely civic nature we may here refer to the welcome given to King Henry at Dover in 1432. The scene is pictured for us by Stow and the poet Lydgate. It is at once simple and artistic, popular and religious.[1]

[1] Herbert, "Livery Companies of London," I, 93 ff.

Robed in gowns of scarlet and with hoods of red the aldermen are described riding out to meet their monarch, who had been crowned King of France. At their head was the mayor, in crimson velvet, with a furred hat of velvet, a girdle of gold about his waist and a "jewel" of gold hung about his neck. In attendance upon him, mounted on great coursers, rode the huntsmen, clad in suits of red bespangled with silver. Then followed in procession the entire commonalty of the city, all in white gowns and scarlet hoods, with "sundry devyses embrowdyd richly." Their garments of white symbolized the purity of their loyalty, while the embroideries evidently suggested the gilds to which they belonged. To lend still greater variety, the Merchant Strangers, the Genoese and Florentines, and the "Easterlings," as the German Hanse Merchants were called, all took part, "clad in there manere." The poet Lydgate thus pictures the scene in the quaint English of his day:

The clothing was of colour full covenable:
The noble mair clad in red velvet,
The shrieves, the aldermen, full notable,
In furryd clokes, the colour of scarlett;
In stately wyse whanne they were met,
Ich one were wel horsyd, and made no delay,
But with there mair rood forth on there way.

The citezens ich on of the citee,
In their entent that they were pure and clene:

Ches them of whit a ful faire lyvere,[2]
In every craft, as it was wel sene,
To shewe the trowthe that they dede mene[3]
Toward the kyng, hadde mad them feithfully
In sundry devyses embrowdyd richely.

What a lavishness and wealth of color, what a freshness and delight of life, as compared with our own modern drabness! Something of the beauty of the faith of these old gildsmen was reflected even in their daily intercourse. The mayor on this occasion was a grocer by profession. What more appropriate, therefore, than that the scenic display which crowned the festivity should represent a grove of foreign fruits:

Oranges, almondys and the pomegranade,
Lymons, dates, there colours fresh and glade,
Pypyns, quynces, chandrellys to disport,
And the pom cedre, corageous to recomfort;
Eke othere fruites, whiche that more comown be,
Quenyngges, peches, costardes, and wardens,
And others manye ful faire and freshe to se.

In the midst of this new Garden of Eden were three wells, in allusion to the mayor's name, who chanced to be called Wells. But the true Scriptural joyousness of these days of Catholic merriment displayed itself when at the King's approach the waters, by some clever mechanical device, suddenly disappeared and all the three wells were filled with purest wine, recalling our Lord's

[2] *I. e.*, "Chose them of white, etc."
[3] "Did mean."

miracle at the wedding feast of Cana. And there, prepared to serve the guests, stood the three allegorical personages: Mercy, Grace and Pity. There, too, were the ancient patriarchs, Enoch and Elias, "full circumspect and wys," with "lokkes hore," to offer prayers for the King and call down God's blessings on his reign: "In enemyes handes that he nevere falle."

In his "Livery Companies of England," published in 1837, William Herbert says:

> What confers an additional interest on the shows of this period is, that almost all the ceremonies of the companies, and indeed every public act, was then more or less mixed up with the Catholic religion; a religion which, bringing with it a peculiar splendor of worship, shed over them a luster which we find but faintly reflected on its disuse.[4]

How religion in its most serious form could be happily combined with popular amusement is best seen in the grand pageants and plays of these times. Our modern theater with its garish lights, its tremulous music and feverish passion, can give no conception of the popular performances of the simple craftsmen, which dealt with the intense realities of life and death, and with the august sanctities of religion. Even the banterings and buffooneries, before the days of the decline, were conceived in the spirit of childish innocence and glee, telling of simple trust in the mercy and love of an Almighty Father. Only when the spirit of

[4] Vol. I, p. 66.

religion itself had been weakened among the people did these performances degenerate until they finally passed away. Most famous among the few survivals was the decennial play of Oberammergau, which has remained the wonder and despair of the world's greatest artists.

To show how truly popular these performances were, it will suffice to point to the gild statutes of a single English town, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Apparently every trade union within its walls performed its public play on Corpus Christi Day. Thus the gild of Barber-Chirurgeons, after going in procession arrayed in their liveries, were afterwards to play at their own expense "The Baptizing of Christ." Similarly the Craft of Weavers in the same city ordained that its members must corporately participate in the procession and must play their play and pageant of "The Bearing of the Cross." The Slaters, according to an ordinance of 1451 were to give their own play, specified at a later date, when they had united into one gild with the Bricklayers, as "The Offering of Isaac by Abraham." The Millers of the same town were enjoined to enact "The Deliverance of the Children of Israel out of the Thraldom, Bondage and Servitude of King Pharao." The House Carpenters, then known as *Wrights,* played "The Burial of Christ," and the Masons, "The Burial of our Lady Saint Mary the Virgin." Many of these ordinances, it may be men-

tioned, refer to the sixteenth century, showing how the religious spirit had still survived in the hearts of the people.

All the crafts annually combined for the solemn Corpus Christi procession. This custom was everywhere observed in all cities of Christendom, and the pageants and processions of Corpus Christi were the great civic as well as religious event of the year. Nothing in modern times can equal the true social spirit which animated these splendid demonstrations of Christian faith and universal brotherhood. Here indeed all were united in a common membership with Christ, their Head. He Himself was present in their midst, as of old among His Apostles when the sacred words, daily spoken in the Holy Mass, were for the first time uttered and that mystery enacted which He commanded should be repeated to the end of time by the successors of His chosen Twelve: "Taking bread, he gave thanks, and brake; and gave to them, saying: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of me." [5] The meaning of those words was clear. The mystery they contained was as infinitely condescending as it was sublime. No wonder, therefore, that the day set aside for its honor should have become the occasion of civic demonstrations such as will never again be witnessed until men are once more united in the one

[5] Luke xxii: 19. (Douay.)

true Faith which alone can satisfy their longings.

To make plain the civic nature of these events we need only instance the Corpus Christi procession held at York. In that single city in the year 1415, ninety-six gilds marched with their insignia and fifty-four pageants were presented in the procession. As early as 1325 we find, in fact, a special Corpus Christi Gild which had developed out of a former merchant gild whose economic usefulness had evidently ceased with the coming of the craft gilds. Not the laity only, but the priors of two religious houses and all the parish priests were enrolled in its membership. The main object of the gild was to make provision for the Corpus Christi procession in which the priests marched with the craft gilds. The latter carried candles, unfolded their banners and displayed their marvelous pageants, after which they regaled themselves in good Scriptural fashion.[6] What could be more closely related than popular happiness and true religion, whether we behold David dancing before the Ark or Christ among the wedding guests. As Lowell beautifully says:

> This is what the Roman Church does for religion, feeding the soul not with the essential religious sentiment, not with a drop or two of the tincture of worship, but making us feel one by one all those original elements of which worship is composed; not bringing the end to us but making us pass over and feel beneath our feet all the golden rounds of the ladder by

[6] Gross, "The Gild Merchant," I, p. 162.

which the climbing generations have reached that end; not handing us drily a dead and extinguished Q. E. D., but letting it declare itself by the glory with which it interfuses the incense-clouds of wonder and aspiration and beauty in which it is veiled. The secret of her power is typified in the mystery of the Real Presence.[7]

But such pageants and processions were not limited to Corpus Christi Day. They frequently took place on the great feast days of the different gilds. The members in their liveries, garlanded with flowers or crowned with wreaths of leaves, bearing in their hands lighted candles which often were most richly ornamented, might be seen marching through the streets of the city with song and music on the way to their own gild church or altar. Here they attended at Mass, which was solemnly celebrated, and a merry banquet followed at which all partook. On the next day they might again assemble at a Requiem sung for the souls of the departed members. As an interesting example it will suffice to quote the regulations for the annual pageant held on the feast of the Purification by the religious gild of St. Mary, established at Beverley in 1355. They are charming in their faith and simplicity.

All the brethren and sisters, the ordinance reads, shall meet together in a fit and appointed place, away from the church; and there one of the gild shall be clad in comely fashion as a queen, like to the glorious Virgin Mary, having what may seem a son in her arms. Two others shall be clad like to Joseph

[7] Other similar flashes occur in Old New England writers.

and Simeon; and two shall go as angels, carrying a candle-bearer, on which shall be twenty-four thick wax lights. With these and other great lights borne before them, and with music and gladness, the pageant Virgin with her Son, and Joseph and Simeon shall go in procession to the church. And all the sisters of the gild shall follow the Virgin; and afterwards all the brethren. Each of them shall carry a wax light weighing half a pound. And they shall go two and two, slowly pacing to the church; and when they have got there, the pageant Virgin shall offer her Son to Simeon at the high altar; and all the sisters and brethren shall offer their wax lights, together with a penny each. All this having been solemnly done, they shall go home again in gladness.[8]

Mass having been heard, as was the custom, they were later in the day to meet again for a simple banquet, regaling themselves with modest but hearty cheer, "rejoicing in the Lord, in praise of the glorious Virgin Mary." Such was the faith, such the happiness, such the civic spirit, such the brotherhood in Christ in those days when there was still a "merrie" England, and when the Catholic Church in all her beauty was close to the hearts and lives of men.

There was withal a spirit of profound democracy in this religion. It displayed itself in the very building of the churches where we behold that deep inward joy that comes from a conscience at peace and a heart inflamed with the love of God. In a letter written in 1145 Abbot Haimon thus describes how the building of Chartres Cathedral was begun:

[8] Cornelius Walford, "Gilds," pp. 244, 245. J. T. Smith.

Who has ever seen! Who has ever heard at all, in times past, that powerful princes of the world, that men brought up in honor and in wealth, that nobles, men and women, have bent their proud and haughty necks to the harness of carts, and that, like beasts of burden, they have dragged to the abode of Christ these wagons, loaded with wines, grains, oil, stone, wood, and all that is necessary for the wants of life, or for the construction of the church? . . . There one sees the priests who preside over each chariot exhort every one to penitence, to confession of faults, to the resolution of a better life! There one sees old people, young people, little children, calling on the Lord with a suppliant voice, uttering to Him, from the depth of the heart, sobs and sighs with words of glory and praise! After the people, warned by the sound of trumpets and the sight of banners, have resumed their road, the march is made with such ease that no obstacle can retard it. . . . When they have reached the church they arrange the wagons about it like a spiritual camp, and during the whole night they celebrate the watch by hymns and canticles. On each wagon they light tapers and lamps; they place there the infirm and sick, and bring them the precious relics of the Saints for their relief. Afterwards the priests and clerics close the ceremony by processions which the people follow with devout heart, imploring the clemency of the Lord and of His Blessed Mother for the recovery of the sick.[9]

Merriment and deep devotion blended in the life of these brave men and leal, who best understood the true meaning of democracy and found its only safeguard in religion, whose worship was no less profound because they loved the brightness and the cheer of life, who mingled laughter with their deepest thoughts; who joyed to see the grinning gargoyle gurgling from cathedral eaves while saints and angels stood in glorious ranks about

[9] Henry Adams, "Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres," pp. 104, 105.

the carven portals that admitted to the House of God. They knew how, as men have never better known, to mingle prayer, work and play into the glowing tapestry of life.

CHAPTER XXV

THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE

WANT of accurate historic knowledge and a dearth of reliable literature on the historic backgrounds of the social question helped for a long time to perpetuate the belief that the Church, in the past, was opposed to the democratization of labor. Hence the conclusion that she must equally be opposed to it in our day. Reference is invariably made in this connection to the occasional clashes of interests between bishops or monasteries on the one side, and the sturdy old gildsmen on the other. They are isolated instances chosen from the long centuries of medieval history and merely serve to call attention to the lasting harmony that existed between the Church and the crafts, whose indebtedness to her was beyond all reckoning.

In dealing with this important question, it is necessary to distinguish between the period preceding the latter part of the fourteenth century, and the period which immediately followed and continued on to the date of the Reformation. Going back to the ninth and eighth centuries, and even to earlier times, when all of Europe was Catholic,

we look in vain for any wide-spread disaffection of the people against the Church. During this period, it is true, the bishops were often temporal sovereigns, while the abbots of famous monasteries not seldom enjoyed an equal influence and power. Such was the accepted condition of the time. The rule of the bishops was characterized by its special benignity, while the wealth of the monasteries was in reality the dower of the poor. "Good hap to live neath the bishop's crook," became a proverbial expression. The influence of the monasteries cannot be called in question, nor the love and respect which all classes showed for the habit of the monk. The gifts which flowed into the coffers of the abbey found their way back again most freely to the people in their need. Religious houses at times lost the spirit of their primitive rule. Highly placed prelates, with increasing prosperity, might yield in particular instances to the lure of temporal interests and ambitions, yet the confidence of the people was never withdrawn from the great body of their bishops and clergy and the truly popular religious orders of the day. Nor was this trust misplaced. Under all circumstances they ever found in them their only lasting friends.

It was under the direct influence of the Church that the democratization of labor took place in the Middle Ages. It was under her guidance and tuition that the craft gilds unfolded their

marvelous statutes. If the application of her teaching, embodying the highest possible conception of human brotherhood, was not perfect on the part either of gildsmen or of clerics, the reason was to be found, not in the Church, but in that human nature which will always fall short of its loftiest ideals. It is clearly irrelevant to speak of any serious discord, at this period, between the Church and the people who owed everything to her.

But can it be said that a change took place in the popular mind? The first great event to be noted occurred at the middle of the fourteenth century. We refer to the Black Death, which carried off one-fourth of the population of Europe. It reached England in 1348. "The clergy seem to have suffered the worst," writes Alfred Milnes, "probably falling a sacrifice to their own devotion in ministering to the dying; and the monasteries worst of all." [1] Such was the example the Catholic clergy has ever given in every great popular calamity, showing how truly and profoundly the welfare of the people is at their heart. Priests and monks were found at their posts, giving their lives for their flocks.

The fewness of laborers, when the plague had passed, enabled those who survived, to demand exorbitant wages. The abundant crops of that year were left to stand unharvested in the fields and the

[1] "From Gild to Factory."

cattle roamed unherded over the pastures. In the cities also the same dearth of laborers existed. The laws repeatedly enacted at this period to forbid the taking or giving of unusual wages are often severely censured. It was not possible strictly to enforce them, and wages almost doubled, but it is wrong to look upon them as capitalistic measures. "These regulations of wages," says Brentano, "were but the expression of the general policy of the Middle Ages, which considered that the first duty of the State was to protect the weak against the strong, which not only knew of rights but also of duties of the individual towards society, and condemned as usury every attempt to take unseemly advantage of the temporal distress of one's neighbor." [2] Yet a great confusion resulted from which Europe seems never to have entirely recovered. A religious decline, too, set in and with it the inevitable economic disorder. Inferior and undesirable postulants, we are told, were often accepted to fill out the ranks of the depleted clergy.

The Church, however, had already accomplished a great work. She had been the dominant influence in the abolition of slavery and had mightily contributed to the disappearance of the old forms of serfdom. She was now, gradually but surely, helping towards the greater emancipation of the peasant classes. The process was normal so long as the direct influence of the Church's

2 "History and Development of Gilds," p. 78.

teaching could be effective. Another instance of the lack of historic information is the statement often made that the liberation of the peasant classes began with Wyclif and the preaching of his "poor priests." The latter, it may be said in passing, were not priests at all, though some of them may have been poor enough after the fashion of the Bolshevist agitator of to-day. Misapplied Scripture texts served for their weapons of destruction. More material means were to be used later.

The theological theories of Wyclif do not concern us here. They centered in a denial of the spiritual authority of the Church and in an attack upon the Holy Eucharist. His direct principle of social anarchism, however, was the doctrine that "dominion is founded in grace." No regard was to be had either for the property or authority of men in the state of sin. It was sufficient for Wyclif or his followers to decide that the men whose property they desired to alienate were not in the state of grace. Since, Wyclif himself, like other reformers, was a close personal friend of the wealthy secular lords, he cautiously limited the application of his principle to ecclesiastics only. This enabled him to curry favor with the rich in a twofold manner. Clerics and monks, he taught, committed sin by the very fact that they held property. It was therefore a pious duty of secular princes to relieve them of this encumbrance which

else must bring them to eternal damnation. The good lords would thus gain for themselves both earth and heaven at one happy stroke. In a similar manner Luther later won the support of his favorite princes by giving them, not merely the property of the Church, but her spiritual authority as well.

Wyclif's "poor priests," unlike their master, had no close intimacy with rich and powerful lords. Logically they extended their principle to secular owners as well. They were the Bolshevists of their time and carried on their campaign with a similar enthusiasm. The existence of real social abuses won a temporary hearing for their wild and exaggerated statements. Their preaching contributed, with other causes, to bring about the Peasant Revolt of 1381.

Lollardy, as this movement was called, was of but short duration. It gathered for the moment a great following among the anti-clerical lords and adventurers, who were greedy to obtain possession of ecclesiastical property and of the spoils of churches and monasteries. It gained adherents also among the disaffected subjects of rich abbeys and lords, and among all who wished to shake off the spiritual authority of the Church. "Wyclif's real influence," says the foremost writer upon this subject, Dr. James Gairdner, "did not long survive his own day, and so far from Lollardy having taken any deep root among the English peo-

ple, the traces of it had wholly disappeared long before the great revolution of which it was thought to be the forerunner.[3] In the meantime the Church continued her effective work for the crafts and the people, who did not fail to show their constant recognition and gratitude. "Here, as in Germany," says Cardinal Gasquet writing of England in the latter fifteenth and early sixteenth century, "the burgher folk, the merchants and the middle class generally, began to pour their gifts into a common fund from which to beautify their parish churches with a profusion which corresponded to, and is indicative of, the general growth in the material comforts of life, and would seem to show that religion had in nowise lost its hold over the hearts of the people."[4] Summing up his impressions of the social conditions of the period, James E. Thorold Rogers says:

> There were none of those extremes of poverty and wealth which have excited the astonishment of philanthropists, and are now exciting the indignation of workmen. The age, it is true, had its discontents, and these discontents were expressed forcibly and in a startling manner. But of poverty which perishes unheeded, of a willingness to do honest work and a lack of opportunity, there was little or none. The essence of life in England during the days of the Plantagenets and Tudors was that every one knew his neighbor, and that every one was his brother's keeper.[5]

[3] See Cardinal Gasquet, "England under the Old Religion and Other Essays."

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 22.

[5] See Gasquet, "The Last Abbot of Glastonbury," pp. 251, 252.

This truth the Church had instilled deep into the minds of men. So she continued in her beneficient influence upon the people, until her teachings of charity and social justice were at last widely disregarded and her great popular institutions disrupted or rendered ineffective by the catastrophe which now impended.

It is impossible, says Cardinal Gasquet in another of his accurate and profound historic studies, to read the sermons of the period following upon the Black Death, "without seeing how entirely the clergy were with the people to secure full and entire liberty for themselves and their posterity." It is probably to the clergy, he concludes, that the preamble of an act passed in the first year of Richard II refers, which says: "Villeins withdraw their services and customs from their lords, by the comfort and procurement of others, their counsellors, maintainers and abettors, etc., etc." [6]

Describing conditions in the "Golden Age," when England still retained the glorious heritage of its Catholic Faith, R. L. Outhwaite, in his study, "The Land or Revolution," contrasts them with the evils that followed on the Reformation, though no controversial purpose was in his mind. He states the facts as he sees them, without penetrating deeper to their ultimate causes, and it is sig-

[6] Cardinal Francis Aidan Gasquet, "The Black Death," pp. 232, 233.

nificant that his only reference to the lands possessed by the monks is the accurate statement that they were "held largely in trust for the people." The monks, we must remember, were themselves laborers, with a right to the soil they tilled. Of the days preceding the Reformation Outhwaite writes:

Englishmen once had no dread of hunger, for they once were free. Four hundred years ago they had won their way out of serfdom and had established the *Golden Age.* Then no man starved, for three or four days' labor provided sufficient food for the week. So it was on the countryside, and so it was in the towns where, united in gilds, the workers were craftsmen and free. And this came about by no miraculous dispensation but through the simple fact that those who wished to till the soil had the opportunity to do so. Those were the days of *Merrie England,* when the village surrounded by its common fields sheltered a yeomanry the like of which the world had not seen before, and has not since. The common people, the Saxon serfs, had won their way to freedom by way of the land, for freedom consists in not being compelled to beg leave of another to toil and live.

But the Reformation now followed, and with it came the era of "the land monopolist" and "the industrial slave market." He thus continues:

Those from whose bondage the serfs had escaped, the feudal holders of one-third of English soil, determined to reestablish serfdom. The free land they saw was the basis of freedom, and this they proceeded to add to their estates. Rapidly the transformation of the Golden Age took place as the great estates grew. The peasants rose in rebellions, but were crushed by the nobles aided by foreign mercenaries of despotic kings. To these estates in the time of Henry VIII were added the monastery lands, held largely in trust for the people. The

gilds were broken up, and the unemployed man appeared. Slavery, with all its pains and penalties, the branding-iron and the gallows, was established, and in the course of fifty years the Golden Age had passed away. Soon after, in the reign of Elizabeth, the first Poor Law was placed on the Statute Book.

From all this the Church had preserved the people. That this is no unfounded statement is plain from the fact that the same consequences followed in other lands. After quoting the English parliamentarian, we shall allow ourselves the luxury of quoting to the same effect the volume of an Anglican chaplain in the Great War, who rightly says:

It is perfectly true that the monastic life was a special vocation, but it is interesting that the ideals of the monastery were largely the ideals of labor outside it. Those ideals existed in the world of labor so long as the monastic system in its midst radiated them — that also is interesting. For the gild was extraordinarily like the community of religious. It also was based on religion, and sought both the sanction and the reward of religion; it also maintained the honesty of physical toil, for the master had first to serve his apprenticeship, not as a junior partner but as a laborer; and it also set high the beauty of its craftmanship as a thing in itself a reward. With the passing of the gild, passed these ideals generally from the economic world.[7]

These facts will be more fully illustrated in the chapter on "The Great Catastrophe."

[7] Robert Keable, "Standing By," pp. 242, 243.

CHAPTER XXVI

CATHOLICS AND POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

AMONG the fictions which long retained their hold upon the popular imagination was the strange assumption that democracy had been begotten by the Reformation. The movement that for a time actually succeeded in crushing almost every expression of popular rights was marvelously transformed into the very fountain-source of democratic liberties. It would indeed be difficult, as men can now readily understand, to point to a more monumental travesty in all history. The patent absurdity was made possible only by the lack of careful and impartial research. Even Luther, who conferred on his own princes the most autocratic powers in spiritual no less than in temporal matters, who fiercely surrendered the hapless peasants into the blood-stained hands of their merciless lords and for generations to come fixed on them the yoke of a new and bitter serfdom, who in the famous sermon preached in 1524 longed for the return of the days of slavery, and to whom in his closing years the indignant people gave the fitting title: "Hypocrite

and princes' menial," was still hailed by some, in our own twentieth century, as the great protagonist of modern democracy. Such praise must seem the consummation of all irony to those who are familiar with his detestation of " the vulgar masses," as he scornfully called them, telling the princelings of his day, that:

> They must be like men who drive mules. One must constantly cling to their necks (*i. e.*, of the common people) and urge them on with whips, or else they will not move ahead. So then are the rulers to drive, beat, choke, hang, burn, behead and break upon the wheel the vulgar masses, Sir All.[1]

With such texts, that can be quoted profusely, written about his pedestal, Luther must form " a sorry sight," indeed, for those who would behold in him the glorification of democracy. " In virtue of the principle *cujus regio, hujus religio* (the lord's religion is the subject's creed)," says Goyan, " faith, in spite of Luther's doctrines, has not been a product and inspiration of conscience, but a *livery* only, imposed by some prince on his subjects." [2] It was Luther himself who is responsible for this twofold autocracy.

The good Church of England fares no better. In her " Constitutions and Canons," June 30, 1640, it was made the sacred duty of every clergyman at least four times a year to preach that " *the*

[1] Erlangen Edition of Luther's Works, XV, 2, p. 276. See " What Luther Taught," Chapter VI.

[2] " *L'Allemagne Religieuse*," p. 2, *apud* Baudrillart.

most sacred order of kings is of Divine right," a doctrine that would have been anathema if uttered in the Middle Ages. The preachers are further to instruct all good subjects that to set up " under any pretense whatsoever, any independent coactive power, either *papal or popular,* whether directly or indirectly . . . is treasonable against God as well as against the King." [3]

In his two articles on " The Catholic Origin of Democracy," in *Studies* for March and June, 1919, to which the author is exceptionally indebted throughout this chapter, Professor Alfred Rahilly shows further how this same doctrine of the Divine right of kings, and their absolute autocracy in things temporal and spiritual, was upheld in the English universities of Reformation days. Only seven years before the " Revolution " of 1688 the University of Cambridge solemnly declared in its address to Charles II:

> We still believe and maintain that our kings derive not their title from the people but from God, that to Him only they are accountable, that it belongs not to the subjects either to create or censure but to honor and obey their sovereign, who comes to be so by a fundamental hereditary right of succession which no religion, no law, no fault or forfeiture can alter or diminish.[4]

At the same time her sister university condemned the " damnable doctrines " of the Jesuit

[3] Laud, " Works," V, p. 613, 614.

[4] Seller, " The History of Passive Obedience," p. 108.

Cardinal Bellarmine, and the Jesuit theologian, Suarez, which soon found its way into the American Declaration of Independence and inspired democratic Englishmen with a larger concept of true popular liberty, though they might not know its source. The very same doctrine is, at the present writing, taught at the Gregorian University at Rome, and is thus compactly stated by Father C. Macksey, S. J., in his "*De Ethica Naturali*," printed for the use of the Roman students:

> The community, constituted into a civil society, is the natural subject on which, of its very essence and of necessity, by the natural law, civil authority descends in the first place. By the consent of the community it subsequently passes to the subject by whom it is permanently and formally exercised.[5]

Ultimately, of course, all authority must be derived from God as its original source. But it is the doctrine of popular rights and of the consent, explicit or implicit, of the governed which was the insufferable heresy in the days of "good Queen Bess." The same held true of the other Reformation countries. "All the people of the Protestant countries," Lord Molesworth quaintly remarked in 1892, "have lost their liberty since they changed their religion for a better." But by the fruit shall the tree be known.

Yet the doctrine of democracy survived and has been safely handed down, not merely to the Catholic schools, but to the world at large, from the

[5] *Thesis* LIII.

Middle Ages. How, we naturally wonder, has this come about? As the first cause, though perhaps not the most important, we may mention the gild organizations. These institutions, though sadly hampered, debilitated and degenerated, still for a time continued in existence. Norwich, the cradle of Congregationalism, as Professor Rahilly points out, was famous for its gilds as well as for its chartered companies. From their ordinances and statutes, established "by the common consent," after the same democratic methods that had obtained in the medieval Religious Orders, it was not a far cry to the Mayflower Covenant of 1620:

> The American colonists, merchant as well as religious adventurers, merely set up farther afield in untrodden soil those little commonwealths and bodies politic which had long existed in Calais and Antwerp and Bruges. Religious gilds working through nonconformist churches, and merchant gilds transformed into trading companies and chartered plantations, combined to produce the United States of America, whose independence was ultimately won not by political theories but largely by the prowess of those who were driven into exile by Puritan persecution and chartered plantations in Ireland.[6]

But it is to the writings of the Catholic schoolmen in particular that we must look for the dynamic principles to which we owe the very conception of all true modern democracy, which is purely a child of the Middle Ages. It was thence that Bellarmine and Suarez and their direct predecessors had drawn those doctrines to which our gen-

[6] *Studies*, June, 1919, p. 197.

uine democratic systems owe their origin. The "Conferences" of Father Persons, the Jesuit, who was known under the name of Doleman, were the source, according to that strict defender of autocratic royalty, Abednego Seller, writing in 1690, "whence most of our modern enemies of the true rights of princes have borrowed both their arguments and their authorities." The "true rights of princes," after the mind of good Abednego, were those comprised under the doctrine of the Divine right of kings, mercilessly demolished by Persons, whose book, in turn, was publicly burned by Oxford University, and its printer, tradition says, "hanged, drawn and quartered." Persons indignantly denounced the Reformation doctrine that princes are subject to no law or limitation, "as though the Commonwealth had been made for them and not they for the Commonwealth," and boldly declared:

> There can be no doubt that the commonwealth hath power to choose their own fashion of government, as also to change the same upon reasonable cause. . . . In like manner it is evident that as the commonwealth hath this authority to choose and change her government, so hath she also to limit the same with what laws and conditions she pleaseth.[7]

This obviously was no comfortable doctrine for the court of Elizabeth and its "State-ridden Church."

The extreme acts of the Puritans were not jus-

[7] *Ibid.*, 198, 199.

tified by the teachings of the Catholic schoolmen, but their conception of democracy itself was derived by them from no other sources. "These Puritan preachers," wrote Selden in his "Table Talk," "if they have anything good, they have it out of Popish books, though they will not acknowledge it for fear of displeasing the people." In the same manner the Covenanters drew upon Jesuit authorities, while Charles I, in 1639, said of the Presbyterian arguments that they "are taken almost verbatim out of Bellarmine and Suarez." [8] Professor Rahilly quotes from Samuel Rutherford's "*Lex Rex*," which was the great Presbyterian armory in those strenuous days. A single brief passage, indeed, suffices to indicate the indebtedness which Rutherford vainly sought to deny:

> Covarruvias, Soto, and Suarez have rightly said that power of government is immediately from God, and this or that definite power is mediately from God, proceeding from God by the mediation of the consent of a community.[9]

So too the Calvinists, "except for their opportunist advocacy of tyrranicide . . . merely repeated, and sometimes unfortunately distorted, the teachings of their Catholic predecessors and masters." As a very pertinent instance reference is made to the Calvinist George Buchanan of whom it has been grandiloquently said that: "The prin-

[8] *Ibid.*, 201–205.
[9] Q. 2, p. 3b, Ed. 1843

ciples which he successfully floated in unpropitious times undoubtedly produced the two great English, the American, and the French Revolutions, with all their continuations and consequences," whereas he himself plainly states: "I will explain not so much my own view as that of the ancients." [10] And would that he had learned his lesson far more thoroughly! The same is true in the case of other Calvinist writers whose democracy, in France, came to a sudden and unprovided end when autocratic principles served their purpose better. For as Baudrillart says:

> If at first the French Calvinists seemed to favor liberty, it was only when the royal power was against them. From the day the heir to the throne was a Protestant they quickly cast all their liberal and democratic theories to the wind and began to preach the doctrine of absolute legitimacy and of passive obedience to the sovereign, whoever he may be.[11]

The Catholic writers, whose doctrines dated back to the Middle Ages, were not responsible for all the conclusions drawn from their books, yet they were clearly the originators of modern democracy. Its entire structure, in so far as it is true and sound, rests upon the work of the Catholic schoolmen and is broadly based upon the foundations laid by medieval thinkers, both lay and clerical.

[10] "*De jure regni apud Scotos.*" See *Studies,* March, 1919, pp. 14–17.

[11] "The Catholic Church, the Renaissance and Protestantism," p. 311.

For a conclusive argument it is hardly necessary to refer to any other source than the "*Patriarcha*," of Sir Robert Filmer, an ardent royalist who died in 1680. He not merely finds that democracy "was first hatched in the schools," but quotes, moreover, a passage from Cardinal Bellarmine as comprising "the strength of all that ever I have read or heard produced for the natural liberty on the subject." The following is the passage from the great Cardinal's "*De Laicis*," as translated by Filmer himself:

> Secular or civil power is instituted by men; it is in the people unless they bestow it on a prince. This power is immediately in the whole multitude as in the subject of it. For this power is in the Divine law, but the Divine law hath given this power to no particular man; if the positive law is taken away, there is left no reason why amongst a multitude (who are equal) one rather than another should bear rule over the rest. Power is given by the multitude to one man or to more by the same law of nature; for the commonwealth cannot exercise this power, therefore it is bound to bestow it upon some one man or some few. It depends upon the consent of the multitude to ordain over themselves a king or consul or other magistrates. And if there be a lawful cause, the multitude may change the kingdom into an aristocracy or democracy.[12]

In quoting at some length from this volume Professor Rahilly alludes to the fact that Jefferson's own copy of it still exists in the Congressional Library, and that there certainly can be no doubt whatsoever that in this very citation from Bellarmine there "is comprised," to adapt the

[12] *Studies*, June, 1919, pp. 206, 207.

words of Filmer to more recent times, "the strength of all that Jefferson or Mason could ever have read or heard produced for the natural liberty of the subject." So that the suggestion is not in the least far-fetched when it is hinted that these very citations from the Catholic schools directly "influenced Mason in writing the Virginia Bill of Rights and Jefferson in drafting the Declaration of Independence." We can nowise doubt, therefore, that the democracy of the United States, like all other forms of sound modern democracy, was indirectly derived from them. In the days of the Reformation there was certainly no hesitation in the minds of men as to the "popish" origin of the "damnable doctrine" of democracy, nor can there be any reasonable doubt of it today.

The expression of this democracy can be traced, in greater or less perfection throughout the entire period of the Middle Ages: in the great religious orders with their systems of representation; in the popular organizations of the gilds with their industrial jurisdiction sanctioned by the State; in numberless city democracies that were based upon gild organizations and maintained their own self-government; in the free town-republics of Germany, in the splendid Catholic cantons of Switzerland, in the independent provinces of Spain, in the cities of the Netherlands, and in the towns of the Lombard League, established in 1168 and de-

fended so successfully in their democratic freedom by the great Pope Alexander III, whose memory still remains in the name of Alessandria.[13]

Particularly valuable as a training for democracy were the early Church councils in the various sections of Europe. The Council of Toledo, in the year 400, dealt with civil as well as ecclesiastical matters and was deputed to act as the equivalent of a National Parliament for Spain. The Spanish people did not fail to profit by this guidance of the clergy, with the result that we find a virile democracy putting forth its claims in the independent towns of Spain early in the twelfth century. "For three centuries at least the organization of the free cities was the natural outlet of all democratic aspirations of the people." [14]

The spirit of democracy ever alive within the Catholic Church is indeed to-day acknowledged in places where we might least expect to find it. It is to this spirit of democracy that President Wilson means to allude when he speaks of the Catholic Church as "a great democracy." Referring to the Middle Ages, he thus writes of her in "The New Freedom":

> The Roman Church was then, as it is now, a great democracy. There was no peasant so humble that he might not become Pope of Christendom; and every chancellery in Europe,

[13] J. A. Dewe, "Medieval and Modern History," p. 119.

[14] "Types of Democracy among Catholics," *The Catholic Magazine for South Africa.*

every court in Europe, was ruled by these learned, trained and accomplished men, the priesthood of that great and dominant body. What kept government alive in the Middle Ages was this constant rise of the sap from the bottom, from the rank and file of the great body of the people through the open channels of the priesthood.[15]

Most interesting of all is the testimony of Dr. Paul Rohrbach, who in "The German Idea in the World" widely distributed during the World War, attacked the Catholic Church, because by its spirit of democracy it impeded the propagation of the idea of imperialistic autocracy. "The religio-democratic pulse which at the present time beats in Catholicism, at least here in Germany," he wrote, "contributes to the weakness of German ideals." No more glorious tribute could have been given to the Catholics of Germany, and to the Catholic Church throughout the world.

It was owing solely to the doctrine and influence of the Church that, as W. S. Lilly says: "The notion of unlimited dominion, of Cæsarism, autocratic or democratic — perhaps the most baneful manifestation of human selfishness — had no place among its political conceptions, which regarded authority as limited and fiduciary: nor did it allow of absolutism in property." [16]

Attention should finally be called here to the many resemblances between the Government of the United States and the government of the

[15] Pp. 85, 86.

[16] "Christianity and Modern Civilization," pp. 160, 161.

Catholic Church, wherever the spirit of democracy finds its truest expression. In the words of the Rt. Rev. John P. Carroll, D.D.:

> The government of the Church has many points of resemblance with our own republican form of government. The Pope, like the President, is elected. Bishops are appointed by the Pope, but only after the priests and bishops of the territory concerned are heard, just as justices of the Supreme Court and Federal judges are appointed by the President, but not without the approval of the United States Senate. The Ecumenical Council, the supreme law-making body in the Church, made up of the Pope and the Bishops, resembles the American Congress, composed of delegates from the various States, with the President at their head. The Pope's college of Cardinals is like the President's Cabinet. The members of the Cabinet are the heads of various departments of the administration, just as the Cardinals in the Roman Curia are heads of the various Congregations which transact the business of the Universal Church. Every American citizen has access to the supreme tribunal at Washington. So the humblest child of the Church has the right of appeal to the highest court in Rome, and no question is decided until it has been given the fullest consideration.

Dr. Charles Phineas Sherman in his three volumes on " Roman Law in the Modern World " traces the conception of modern liberty to the Catholic Canon Law and to St. Thomas and the Catholic schools. His theory that these themselves derived it from Roman civil law is unfounded, since the latter has merely been used as the support of modern autocracy. To sum up therefore the conclusions arrived at here we can do no better than to refer once more to the first of the articles by Professor Alfred Rahilley:

"Such then are the seed-thoughts and the embryo-outlines of democracy which we owe to Catholic civilization and culture. The great Church Councils for over eight centuries slowly trained Europe in the theory and practice of self-government, finally eventuating in commune, cortes, parliament and states-general. The organization of the Church — the representation of cathedral and collegiate chapters, the appointment of proctors, above all the democracy of the friars — showed the way to secular States. The discussions concerning the structure of the Church formed for nearly three centuries the great polemic of the West and thus inaugurated and habituated in men's minds those categories of political thought whose inheritors we are to-day. And all the while there flowed that stream of deep, patient thinkers who, from Thomas of Aquino, Nicholas d' Oresme, Antonius of Florence, down to Almain, Major, Bellarmine and Suarez, upheld the ideal of popular rights and government by consent. It was the ideas of these men to which the Catholics of the Ligue made their appeal; and notwithstanding their vehemence and passion, their ideals were sound. It was to this same treasure house of the past that the French Calvinists turned in their first and short-lived alliance with democracy. And it was back once more to the rock whence they were hewn that the Covenanters and Presbyterians turned when the day of reckoning came for the

Stuarts. From the annals of the past, from Bracton and Fortescue, from forgotten canonists, legists and schoolmen, from the great conciliar controversialists, were dragged forth principles which shattered forever the Reformation tenet of Divine Right and traversing the ocean founded the American Republic, principles whose dynamic possibilities and far-reaching consequences are not yet exhausted."

It is no surprise, therefore, to read the statement by Pope Benedict XV to Cardinal Luçon, according to the report in the New York *Sun*, September 8, 1919:

> The great outstanding fact in the world to-day is the ever-strengthening current everywhere toward democracy. The proletariat classes, as they are called, having taken a preponderant part in the war, desire in every country to derive therefrom the maximum advantage. . . . The Catholic Church has always loved those who suffer and has always taught that public power established for the common good must work especially to improve conditions for those who suffer. That is why the Catholic clergy must not oppose the proletarian revindications, but must favor them, provided they remain within the limits of honesty and justice.

Good words these, and just as good is the Pope's caution against the excesses of those who "to the detriment of everybody would overturn the social order which human nature renders necessary." The spirit of democracy breathes nowhere more freely than within the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XXVII

MODERN CATHOLIC GILD PROGRAM

OF all the constructive labor movements that at the close of the war are sweeping over the world in a mighty wave of industrial unrest, there is not one whose leaders are not inspired by the supreme idea of labor organization. Trade unionism and the cooperative movement, Syndicalism and the groupings of the I. W. W., gild Socialism and the Soviet system are but different and often hostile phases of the same world-wide labor agitation that is steadily gathering to a crest and moving on with impetuous force. Law-abiding or opposed to all authority, Christian or relentlessly determined on the destruction of all religious beliefs, these various movements still conform with one another in a vague acceptance of the gild idea.

Anarchism cannot be reckoned among the world's constructive forces. Though it may blend with other movements and even for the time adopt their purposes, it remains, as its name implies, a pure negation. Its immediate object is neither more nor less than the annihilation of the entire existing order of society. Out of the ashes of the old world, sunk in flame and ruin, a new or-

der is phenix-like to arise in liberty, youth and beauty. Destruction is sufficient for to-day. The morrow will provide for itself. Such was the principle of its founder, Bakounin. The constructive ideas that its ardent champions claim for it are nothing more than a mere general license, with no authority of God or man to hold it in restraint.

Socialism, too, while allied with a thousand plans that are not of its own origin or being, contains but one vague constructive thought: The more or less common ownership of the means of production and distribution. How far this shall be effected, how it shall be carried out, and what shall be its future details, no one is qualified to say. We do not marvel, therefore, that Socialism has been the prolific breeding place of every variety of radical thought. Countless numbers of its leaders, and of its rank and file have steadily drifted to the gild idea, which many of its own members now conceive to be the only practical working plan.

Men realize that the outcome of Socialism can be nothing but tyranny. This was again fully evinced in its ultimate development, Bolshevism. Speaking of the philosophy of the Russian Bolshevists, the American Secretary of Labor, the Hon. William B. Wilson, rightly said:

> The will of the majority is as objectionable to them as it was to the Kaiser or the Tsar. It establishes a dictatorship on the plea that the autocrat knows better what is best for the people

than they themselves know. It sets up a close dictatorship which demands obligatory labor service. The worker sacrifices his own free will. Whether he likes his employment or not — whatever may be his desire to move, he cannot do so, without permission of the dictator. He cannot change the conditions of his employment, he must not quit, because of the merciless "dictatorship of individuals for definite processes of work."

This dictatorship would control the courts which are to be used as a means of discipline that will consider responsibility for the "pangs of famine and unemployment to be visited upon those who fail to produce bread for men and fuel for industry."

The public press is to be systematically repressed or controlled. Nothing is to reach the attention of the masses except that which has been prepared for them.

The gild system, then, under one form or another, is doubtless the most important social suggestion for our own time, and indeed for any stage of industrial development. It is the one unfailing means of self-help that labor possesses. The first true conception of the craft-gild idea was given to the world by the Catholic Church. We are not therefore surprised that in assigning the causes of our modern social disorders Pope Leo XIII significantly singled out before all others the abolition of the gilds: "For the ancient workingmen's gilds were abolished in the last century, and no other organization took their place." [1] So, too, in the work of reconstruction he naturally placed the greatest stress upon their speedy restoration. It will be easy for working men to solve aright the question of the hour, he tells

[1] "On the Condition of the Working Classes." See A. C. Breig, "Papal Program of Social Reform," p. 10.

them, " if they will form associations, choose wise guides and follow on the path which with so much advantage to themselves and the commonwealth was trodden by their fathers before them." [2] The utmost betterment of the condition of each individual member " in body, mind and property," [3] is the purpose for which these gilds are to be founded. But for their success religion is as essential to-day as in the days of old. It is true that the outline of these new organizations drawn by Pope Leo in his Encyclical on " The Condition of the Working Classes," is suggestive merely of an ideal Christian labor unionism, such as alone was practical at the time of his writing. This does not preclude a far closer approximation to the medieval gild system. He purposely refrains from adding more specific details, since the latter, as he wisely remarks, must of necessity vary with time, and place, and circumstances:

> We do not judge it expedient to enter into minute particulars touching the subject of organization: this must depend on national character, on practice and experience, on the nature and aim of the work to be done, on the scope of the various trades and employments, and on other circumstances of fact and of time: all of which should be carefully considered.[4]

Following the example of his predecessor, Pope Pius X, too, called attention above all to the need

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 54.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

of workingmen's unions. He, too, reminded men that social science is not of yesterday, that no new civilization is to be invented and no city to be built in the clouds; that the successful organizations established in the past, under the wise cooperation of Church and State, are of far more than historic interest. Writing to the Archbishops and Bishops of France, he thus instructed them in this regard:

> It will be enough to take up again, with the help of true workers for social restoration, the organisms broken by the Revolution, and to adapt them to the new situation created by the material evolution of contemporary society in the same Christian spirit which of old inspired them. For the true friends of the people are neither revolutionists, nor innovators, but traditionalists.[5]

Urgently as he recommends the gild ideal, his greatest stress is placed upon the need of adaptation, the need of carefully availing ourselves of "all the practical methods furnished at the present day by progress in social and economic studies." This thought is even more clearly expressed in his letter to the Bishops of Italy, June 11, 1905:

> It is impossible at the present day to reestablish in the same form all the institutions which may have been useful, and were even the only efficient ones in past centuries, so numerous are the radical modifications which time has brought to society and life, and so many are the fresh needs which changing circum-

[5] Letter to Archbishops and Bishops of France, August 25, 1910.

stances cease not to call forth. But the Church throughout her long history has always and on every occasion luminously shown that she possesses a wonderful power of adaptation to the varying conditions of civil society, without injury to the integrity or immutability of faith or morals.[6]

For a brief but complete summary of all that has hitherto been said we may turn to the Encyclical of Leo XIII on "The Condition of the Working Classes." Referring to the various associations and organizations that can be created for the benefit of the laborer, he concludes:

The most important of all are workingmen's unions; for these virtually include all the rest. History attests what excellent results were brought about by the craft gilds of olden times. They were the means of affording not only many advantages to the workingmen, but in no small degree of promoting the advancement of art, as numerous monuments remain to bear witness. Such unions should be suited to the requirements of this our age, an age of wider education, of different habits, and of far more numerous requirements in daily life.[7]

But neither Leo XIII nor Pius X could have foreseen the rapidity with which social developments were accelerated by the stirring events of the World War. The slow material evolution of centuries was then compressed within as many years of energetic, throbbing life, of revolutionary and often misdirected social action. Yet it was all finally to aid in bringing the world nearer to the ideals of the Middle Ages, in making possible

[6] "On Christian Social Reform," Catholic Social Guild Pamphlets, pp. 18, 19.

[7] Cnf. Breig, p. 48.

a closer approximation of the Catholic gild system than even Leo XIII, with all his marvelous insight into the social developments of the future, could have considered feasible. He has not, however, failed to leave provision for even this situation. We need but turn again to the final norm by which, as he says, every labor organization of the future must be tested and found true or wanting:

> To sum up, then, we may lay it down as a general and lasting law, that workingmen's associations should be so organized and governed as to furnish the best and most suitable means for attaining what is aimed at, that is to say, for helping each individual member to better his condition to the utmost in body, mind and property.[8]

This ideal was strictly kept in view in the program of social reconstruction drawn up by the Administrative Committee of the National Catholic War Council, January, 1919, and later incorporated in the *Congressional Record* of the United States. That suggestions occur here which were never formally included in the Encyclicals of Leo XIII or Pius X need not startle anyone. They are not the less surely contained in that " general and lasting law " of the great " Pope of the Workingmen " which was just quoted. In the reconstructive program, stamped with the seal of the Hierarchy of the United States, can be found the consummation of the gild idea. In their most vital passage the Bishops say:

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 54.

The full possibilities of increased production will not be realized so long as the majority of the workers remain mere wage-earners. The majority must somehow become owners, or at least in part, of the means of production. They can be enabled to reach this stage gradually through cooperative productive societies and copartnership arrangements. In the former the workers own and manage the industries themselves; in the latter they own a substantial part of the corporate stock and exercise a reasonable share in the management. However slow the attainment of these ends they will have to be reached before we can have a thoroughly efficient system of production, or an industrial social order that will be secure from the danger of revolution.[9]

Such is the aim of the new Catholic gild system. No one maintains that these developments are possible without wisely directed labor organizations, both where there is question of establishing cooperative productive societies — a true gild ideal — or of merely sharing in the management of industries, obviously through the representatives of craft gilds. Such, too, is clearly the meaning of the Bishops, who strongly vindicate the right of labor "to organize and to deal with employers through representatives," and heartily approve of the establishment of shop committees, "working wherever possible with the trade union." [10] That such methods will imply "to a great extent the abolition of the wage-system," they candidly confess, but their main purpose is the increase of

[9] "Social Reconstruction." Reconstruction Pamphlets, No. 1, p. 22.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

private productive ownership and so the most perfect attainment of the supreme gild ideal proposed by Leo XIII: the betterment of the condition of each individual member "to the utmost in body, mind and property." In the words of Pope Pius X, they are "neither revolutionists, nor innovators, but traditionalists." And with these great Pontiffs they, too, understand that no program of labor can be finally successful that is not inspired by true religious ideals. Here is the great need of the future.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE GREAT CATASTROPHE

THE Reformation, as every intelligent and impartial student of history will now freely admit, was not primarily a religious, but an economic revolution. It took root, as a non-Catholic clergyman recently expressed it to the writer, in autocracies only. It relied entirely upon the favor of the powerful secular lords, who gladly disguised their personal greed and ambition under the cloak of religion. The poor, as even men like Harnack confess, were to be the great sufferers. "Politically and socially," writes Dr. Cram, "the inevitable outcome of the Renaissance and Reformation was absolutism and tyranny, with force as the one recognized arbiter of action." [1] That such statements are matters of fact that can no longer give offense to open-minded Protestants shows the progress that has been made towards a better understanding of history.

It is equally admitted by Catholics, in their own regard, that grave abuses existed at this time in the Church, not doctrinally, since her teaching has never changed since the days of the Apostles, but on the part of many of her members. In

[1] "The Sins of the Fathers," p. 9.

England and in Germany, the two great Reformation countries, the Church was suffering at the same time both from a plethora of wealth and an anemia of poverty. A vast proportion of the landed property of these countries had been gathered into the hands of ecclesiastical lords who often took but little interest in the welfare of the souls entrusted to their care. Abbeys and convents were not unfrequently tinctured with worldliness. In the mean time deserving priests were, in too many instances, but poorly and inadequately provided for. Such conditions lent themselves admirably to the caustic pen of the satirist and the misdirected attacks of the reformer. The fault, where it existed, was not that of religion, but of politics. It was not a question of the Church interfering with the State, but the time-worn story of the State interfering with the Church. As Cardinal Gasquet writes of the time of Henry VIII:

> The bishops were, with some honorable exceptions, chosen by royal favor rather than for spiritual qualifications. However personally good they may have been, they were not ideal pastors of their flocks. Place-seeking, too, often kept many of the lords spiritual at court, that they might gain or maintain influence sufficient to support their claims to further preferment. The occupation of bishops over much in the affairs of the nation, besides its evident effect on the state of clerical discipline, had another result. It created in the minds of the new nobility a jealous opposition to ecclesiastics, and a readiness to humble the power of the Church by passing measures in restraint of its ancient liberties.[2]

[2] "The Last Abbot of Glastonbury," pp. 25, 26.

Similar precisely was the dark side of the picture in Germany, as presented by Janssen, a most impartial historian. Men had in many instances flagrantly failed to observe the teachings of the Church, and avarice became the besetting sin of the day. Neither had the clergy themselves always been loyal to the spirit of their Divine Master and the high ideals of the Sermon on the Mount:

> The lower orders of parochial clergy, whose merely nominal stipends were derived from the many precarious tithes, were often compelled by poverty, if not tempted by avarice, to work at some trade which was quite inconsistent with their position, and which exposed them to the contempt of their parishioners. The higher ecclesiastical orders, on the other hand, enjoyed abundant and superfluous wealth, which many of them had no scruple of parading in such an offensive manner as to provoke the indignation of the people, the jealousy of the upper classes, and the scorn of all serious minds.[3]

Here then we have plainly stated the worst side of the case. Moral delinquencies were obviously not wanting, and we must add in fine, as Cardinal Manning suggests, the distraction caused shortly before in the minds of men by the great Western Schism.

But this is not the entire picture, nor does it in any way represent the Church herself. Hampered by the evil of State interference which thrust into the place of the chosen shepherds of her flock worldly-minded princes and court favor-

[3] "History of the German People," II, p. 293.

ites, she still continued as before in her work of charity and in her fearless vindication of the principles of social justice, while preaching the pure Gospel of Christ as she had done in the centuries past. Sanctity had not departed from her religious orders because some of their members had fallen into laxity, nor was zeal for the cause of God and of his poor less truly the dominant characteristic of the Church because some of her pastors had been found unworthy.

It was but the fulfilment of Christ's prophecy that the tares should be permitted to grow up with the wheat, and that the net of His Church should hold alike the good and the bad until the time of final separation. So it has always been from the days of the Apostles, and so it will remain. But it is also true that there are periods of more than usual delinquency. Such was the case in the years immediately preceding the "Reformation." Unhappily, in place of seeking to conform the lives of men more perfectly to the true Faith of their fathers, a new religion was substituted in its stead. Here, as is now more clearly seen than ever before, was the beginning of all our economic evils. Ralph Adams Cram thus briefly states the case:

> For 300 years, generation after generation has been fed on the shameless fiction of historians and theologians until it is bred in the bone that the Reformation, the suppression of the monasteries, the Huguenot revolt, etc., were godly acts that

formed the everlasting cornerstones of modern civilization. They were: but what that civilization was we are now finding out and paying for at a price never exacted before since Imperial Rome paid in the same coin.[4]

To have these facts made clear in the minds of men, and to know that such statements can no longer be looked upon with suspicion, as the product of Catholic zeal or of an artistic or intellectual partiality for medievalism, is a distinct gain, economically no less than culturally. As Muezzin writes in the London *Athenæum:*

Man in the Middle Ages somehow held the clue to a happiness and a harmony that we have lost. Life had a meaning for him which transcended the desires of the flesh and the promptings of self-interest; his universe was charged with intelligible and blessed purpose; and his work, which was consecrated to the service of that meaning and that purpose, was crowned with such exuberance of joy and beauty that the cathedrals, abbeys and churches of his creation tease us moderns out of thought, so sublime they seem, so unattainable to the more accomplished, more learned craftsman of to-day.[5]

The greater accomplishment and learning of the modern laborer, where this may be said to exist, is merely upon the surface. Culturally the medieval craftsman was immeasurably superior to the average workman of to-day. Education is of the whole man, and such an education the medieval craftsman enjoyed in his religion and his churches, as well as in his gilds and his craft. The most

[4] "The Sins of the Fathers," p. 96.

[5] May, 1917, p. 223.

striking and obvious fact of these ages, as the writer last quoted remarks, is "the universality of the feeling and appreciation for beauty." Beauty dwelled with men and walked with them and found expression at their touch. The things of the spirit were then shared by all and expressed by all. "Those prayers in stone, which are so marvelous in the eyes of posterity, were not built by highly paid specialists, but by the common people themselves, who enriched their handiwork with a thousand blossoms of their quaint and untutored imagination." [6] Such was the perfection of democratic industry, its flower, and glory, and joy.

"In those times and in that society the trinity of the human spirit, beauty, truth and love, was a trinity in unity," the unity of one Catholic Faith. All this was swept away by the Reformation, through the instrumentality of autocratic rulers to whose grasping greed the people were mercilessly delivered, to fall an easy prey, subsequently, to the no less merciless autocracy of that capitalism which now was given birth.

The sickness which had broken out in the social organism, previous to the Reformation, was not unto death, nor did it at all effect the entire body. This still remained sound. A local remedy only was needed. Luther himself was forced sadly to admit on many an occasion that the cities of Germany which most eagerly welcomed him had

[6] *Ibid.*

changed for the worse after accepting his "New Evangel."[7] The same can clearly be shown to have been the case in England, where the Commons became the laboring poor,[8] and in every other land into which the Reformation entered. Catholic countries were in many cases hardly less affected by the reflex of the disastrous economic doctrines which now gained ground as the corollary to the new religious theory of individualism. In too many instances the State, though nominally Catholic, hampered the Church in every way and made impossible her free social activity, while the false principles, imported from abroad, confused the minds of men. Hence the universality of the social disorder, as wide-spread as had once been the beneficent influence of the Church.

The width and breadth and depth of the economic disaster implied in the Reformation is only now beginning to be understood. "We talk with a great deal of indignation of the Tweed ring," says a Protestant divine, the Rev. Dr. Jessopp, in "The Great Pillage," "the day will come when some one will write the story of two other rings: the ring of the miscreants who robbed the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII was the first;

[7] "Now that one devil has been driven out, seven others, worse than the former, have entered into us, as we can see in princes, lords, nobles, burghers, and peasants."— Luther's words in 1529. (Erlangen Edition, xxxvi, p. 411.) "What Luther Taught," Chapter IV.

[8] Cobbett.

but the ring of the robbers who robbed the poor and helpless in the reign of Edward VI was ten times worse than the first."

From the closing of the monasteries, as the havens of all human miseries and the open inns of God's poor, the world has never recovered:

They burnt the homes of the shaven men, that had been quaint and kind,
Till there was no bed in a monk's house, nor food that man could find
The inns of God where no man paid, that were the walls of the weak,
The King's Servants ate them all. And still we did not speak.

So sang Chesterton of the first of the great deeds of pillage which took place at the same time with the looting of the churches, and whose spiritual consequences extended with the most dreadful results into the domain of economics. The second act was the robbing of the gild property devoted to religious purposes, which practically implied a complete act of confiscation, since the great funds which the gilds devoted to works of charity and similar objects, were intimately associated with religion and held and administered in its name. Hence the writer upon "Gilds" in the non-Catholic "Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics" rightly affirms that: "The Reformation by disendowing the religious and social gilds and crippling the organization of the craft gilds, prepared the way for Poor Law reform and the

changes in the industrial revolution which were then shaping." The immediate consequences of the royal pillage are thus forcefully described by Dr. Jessopp:

> Almshouses in which old men and women were fed and clothed were robbed to the last pound, the poor alms-folk being turned out into the cold at an hour's warning to beg their bread. Hospitals for the sick and needy, sometimes magnificently provided with nurses and chaplains, whose very *raison d'être* was that they were to look after and care for those who were past caring for themselves — these were stripped of all their belongings, the inmates sent out to hobble into some convenient dry ditch to lie down and die in, or to crawl into some barn or hovel there to be tended, not without fear of consequences, by some kindly man or woman who could not bear to see a suffering fellow creature drop down and die at their own doorposts.[9]

The same results followed in Germany, and Luther's complaints that people, after adopting the " true " religion of his own making no longer interested themselves in charity as they had done before, were unavailing. The princes and their hirelings had eaten up and spent in horses, luxuries and vices the dowries of the poor. The people had no mind to replace them. " We wish to do nothing but take and rob by force what others have given and founded," Luther exclaimed regretfully of the work begun by him.[10]

The looting of the gilds began with the act of Parliament of Henry VIII entitled: " An acte

[9] " The Great Pillage."

[10] Erlangen Ed., XLIII, p. 164.

for dissolucion of colleges, chauntries, and free chapelles, at the king's majestie's pleasure," and was brought to its completion in the next reign when the new act, 1 Edward VI, c. XIV, demanded that: "All payments by corporations, misteryes or craftes, for priests' obits and lamps," be thenceforth given to the king. The law itself was entitled: "An acte whereby certaine chauntries, colleges, free chapells and the possessions of the same be given to the king's majestie." Writing of the effect of these acts, in his work on "The Livery Companies of London," William Herbert says:

> The effects of the Reformation were severely felt by the livery companies. It had been customary in making gifts and devises to these societies in Catholic times, to charge such gifts with annual payments, for supporting chauntries for the souls of the respective donors; and as scarcely an atom of property was left without being so restricted, at a period when the supposed efficacy of these religious establishments formed part of the national belief, almost the whole of the companies' Trust Estates became liable, at the Reformation, to change masters with the change of religion.[11]

What was true of these companies, which represented the wealthier middle class, was all the more true of the ordinary craft gild. "The powers of the gilds," Professor Cunningham believes, "had been so much affected by the legislation of Edward VI that they had but little influence for good or evil." [12] Professor Cheyney con-

[11] P. 113.

[12] "Modern Times," Part I, p. 26.

siders it the heaviest blow inflicted on the gilds.[13]

Enormous loans were next exacted of the companies and a number of "sponging expedients" resorted to, by which, as William Herbert says: "That 'mother of her people,' Elizabeth, and afterwards James and Charles, contrived to screw from the companies their wealth."[14] When forced loans and levies had been pushed as far as they would go, Elizabeth granted "patents for monopolies and for the oversight and control of different trades." Thus in 1590 one of the Queen's courtiers, Edward Darcy, sued and obtained a patent against a Leathersellers' Company. This empowered him to set his seal upon all the leather that was to be sold in England, for which "he sometimes received the tenth part, the ninth part, the seventh, the sixth, the fourth, and sometimes, and often, the third part of the value of the commodity."[15] We are not therefore surprised that the establishment of gilds was still encouraged in Elizabeth's reign. They were a constant source of revenue to the crown or the courtiers. The gilds were not discontinued at once with the Reformation; many of them sufficiently recovered from the confiscation of their property after redeeming it at a high cost, but their economic efficiency was a thing of the past. This is

[13] "Industrial and Social History," p. 158.

[14] Herbert, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

[15] Stype's Stow, II, 293. W. Herbert.

the one fact to be borne in mind. They now gradually passed away or became mere capitalistic societies. Their soul was reft from them with their religion.

The way was now open, both for political autocracy and for individualistic capitalism. What followed is too well known to call for description here. The domestic system, the factory system and the industrial revolution are the successive mile stones. With each step forward towards a loudly acclaimed national prosperity, the toiling masses were ground more helplessly beneath the feet of that merciless idol of modern commercialism to which the Reformation had surrendered them. In breaking with Catholicism, as Dr. Ralph Adams Cram wisely analyzes the process that now took place, religion and all spiritual interests and principles were separated from the economic and material phases of life:

> The division was not avowed, indeed, particularly during the Puritan régime; it was part of the system that religion and life should be more aggressively at one than at any time since the earlier theocracy of the Hebrews. Under the Commonwealth in England, the Puritan tyranny in New England, and the capitalistic autocracy in Great Britain, it was practically impossible to draw a line between Church and State; superficially it seemed as if the identity, or rather cooperation, was more perfect than at any time during the Catholic Middle Ages. Certainly the abuses of power, the gross infractions of liberty, the negation of even rudimentary justice in legislation, in law and in society, that followed from this apparent union, were more aggravated and intolerable. As a matter of fact, however,

the alliance was only between a formal and public religion and the equally formal machinery of government; it did not extend to the individual, and here, in his domestic, social, business and political relations, the severance was almost complete. The typical figure in Protestantism is Luther, preaching a lofty doctrine of personal union with God, and conniving at bigamy, adultery and the massacre of starving peasants; and the pious iron-master or mill magnate of Badford or Leeds, zealously supporting his favorite form of Evangelicalism, pouring out his money for the support of missions to heathen countries or for the abolition of slavery, enforcing the strictest Sabbatarianism in his own household — and fighting in Parliament and through the press for the right to continue to employ little children of six years old in his mines, crawling on all fours, half naked, dragging carts of coal by ropes around their tender bodies, or to profit, by the threat of starvation, through mill hands whose wages were a miserable pittance, insufficient to keep body and soul together, and who were forbidden under penalty of the law to combine with one another for self-protection.[16]

The industrial slavery that fettered the city-laborer after the Reformation can be paralleled only by the injustice perpetrated upon the land. Reference has already been made to Outhwaite's treatise [17] which tells how the tenements of Glasgow were crowded, " because 3,600,000 acres had been turned into silent sanctuaries for the red deer." So the English farmer was driven to the slums of London to yield place to the Rothschild stag-hounds. At the diet of Mecklenburg, in 1607, as Döllinger informs us, the peasants were declared mere ciphers. They could be robbed at pleasure of the acres their forefathers had pos-

[16] " The Sins of the Fathers," pp. 94, 95.

[17] Chapter XXV.

sessed. They were reduced to a slavery which differed from that of the blacks in no respect except that they might not be taken from their families and sold to the highest bidder. "Yet this law was often eluded and the serfs were often trafficked like horses or cows." [18]

Basing his statements upon the facts gathered by Döllinger, Alfred Baudrillart, of the French Academy, thus summarizes the conditions of the European peasantry as the effect of the Reformation:

> The introduction of the Reformation in Pomerania caused the introduction of a similar slavery. The law of 1616 decreed that all peasants were serfs without claims of any sort. Preachers were obliged to denounce from their pulpits the peasants who had taken flight. . . . In Sweden the liberty of the peasants was the price the King paid for the assistance of the nobility in the accomplishment of the religious revolution. In Denmark and in Norway the nobles followed this example. In Denmark the peasant was subjected to serfdom like a dog. "Enforced labor," says the historian Allen, "was increased arbitrarily, the peasants were treated like serfs." As late as 1804, personal liberty was granted to 20,000 families of serfs. . . . *In Scandinavia, as in Germany, Lutheranism was advantageous to the sovereign and the aristocracy only.*[19]

But could this catastrophe have been averted by the Church? It certainly could have been. As John L. and Barbara Hammond state the case in their book "The Town Laborer":

[18] Baudrillart, "The Catholic Church, the Renaissance and Protestantism," p. 308; Boll, "*Histoire de Mecklembourg*"; Döllinger, "*Kirche und Kirchen.*"

[19] *Op. cit.*, pp. 308, 309, 312.

> Religion in one form or another, might have checked this spirit by rescuing society from a materialistic interpretation, insisting on the conception of man as an end in himself (*i. e.*, dependently upon God), and refusing to surrender that revelation to any science of politics or any law of trade. Such a force was implicit in the medieval religion that had disappeared, good and bad elements alike, at the Reformation.[20]

It had not indeed disappeared with the Reformation, but its voice had for the time been disregarded in the political and economic life of the nations. There was nothing "bad" in the elements of this religion itself. The evil was all, then as now, in the hearts of men and in their want of conformity to its teachings. By the unhappy separation from the Church founded by Christ upon Peter men had lost the one and only authority that could with certainty guide and direct them in the principles of social justice and of charity. Under Catholicism, however unworthy individual representatives of the Church might at times be found, the principles which they were obliged to admit and to teach ever embodied the true spirit of Christian brotherhood. There was consequently not merely the possibility, but the moral certainty of reform.

As a teaching body, the clergy remained true to the unadulterated Gospel of Christ. The doctrine of the Church insisted upon the rights of the workingman, the just and reasonable distri-

[20] "The Town Laborer, 1760–1832," pp. 328, 329.

bution of earthly goods, and the universal law of helpfulness and brotherly love. It repudiated the claim of the capitalist to dispose at pleasure of his property, without regard to the common good, and denied in all its phases the theory of the false modern individualism, while offering the fullest liberty to all true individual development in every sphere of endeavor. So, too, the monk was kept within his strict, but voluntary, vow of poverty and the ecclesiastic might not appropriate at his mere will the proceeds of rich benefices without considering the poor. To all alike was applied the principle, so clearly expressed by St. Thomas in the famous passage quoted by Pope Leo XIII in his labor encyclical: "Man should not consider his outward possessions as his own, but as common to all, so as to share with them without difficulty when others are in need." This doctrine has found its practical industrial expression for our own times in the concluding words of the pastoral on "Social Reconstruction" by the American Bishops:

> The laborer's right to a decent livelihood is the first moral charge upon industry. The employer has a right to get a reasonable living out of his business, but he has no right to interest on his investment until his employees have obtained at least living wages. This is the human and Christian, in contrast to the purely commercial and pagan, ethics of industry.

So the unbroken tradition is handed down and the inviolate teaching of the Church still con-

tinues from the Middle Ages, as it began with the preaching of Christ and the Sermon on the Mount. By this teaching can the evils of today be remedied as were the evils of yesterday. By its light shall we learn the proper limitation of interest on capital, and the fair remuneration of management and labor, together with the true spirit of cooperation, copartnership and Christian brotherhood.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE TRIUMPH OF WORKINGMEN'S COOPERATIVES

THE basis of all true social reconstruction is the gild concept. The ideal social order will be that which most perfectly applies it. The medieval gilds continued in their usefulness for many centuries. There is no reason why a new gild development, as perfectly adapted to our own times, should not continue in existence for as many centuries to come, stabilizing our economic conditions, ending class-conflict and securing social peace and welfare. Minor adjustments can readily be made with changing circumstances, as the old gildsmen constantly adapted their sane and approved principles, based on the Gospel and the natural law, to the newly arising needs of the day.

Lest it be imagined that we are here dealing with empty illusions, it may be well to begin by showing how the gild idea is already practically and successfully applied in what may be called the merchant gilds of our day. Like the medieval English gilds of that name they are not the outgrowth of high finance, but the achievements of simple workingmen. The economic gild idea, as conceived in its perfection, is a movement of the

workingmen, by the workingmen, for their own and the common good, understanding by "workingmen" all those who labor either with hand or brain, provided their purpose is not the amassing of their own individual profits. They must seek the common good no less than their own advantage.

It was in 1844 that twenty-eight poor weavers organized in England a cooperative store, dealing in four commodities only, the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society. The movement prospered with never a failure or a single lean year. Within three quarters of a century it embraced one-third of the total population of Great Britain and annually distributed to its members commodities amounting in worth to $1,000,000,000. Its profits were then $100,000,000 a year, of which $65,000,000 were returned in dividends to the members, the remaining portion being used for interest on capital or for education, propaganda and welfare purposes. Dividends represented the worker's savings on his purchases which had been made at market prices.

The full meaning of its "dividends" to the workingman will be made clear when it is stated in concrete terms that they ordinarily amounted to a sum large enough to pay the entire rent bill for the enrolled laborer and his family. Membership, therefore, in a cooperative trading society was equivalent for him, to the free gift of a home.

Surely no small consideration. The figures here quoted are offered on the authority of Mr. James P. Warbasse, President of the Cooperative League for America in 1919, who thus describes the state of the Cooperative British Wholesale Society at the close of the war:

The British Wholesale Society supplies 1,200 societies. It owns its own steamships. It has fourteen great warehouses. It gives lavishly of its great resources towards welfare work. It is the largest purchaser of Canadian wheat in the world. Its eight flour mills are the largest in Great Britain. These mills produce thirty-five tons of flour every hour for the people who own the mills. The cooperators of Glasgow own the largest bakery in the world. The British Cooperative Wholesale Society owns sixty-five factories. Their soap works make 500 tons of soap a week. They produce 5,000,000 pairs of boots annually. They conduct three great printing plants. Their 24,000 acres of farms in England produce vast quantities of dairy products, fruit and vegetables. They have recently purchased 100,000 acres of the best wheat lands in Canada. They own their own coal mines. They own 3,200 acres of tea plantations in Ceylon and vineyards in Spain. In Africa they control vast tracts of land for the production of olives, from which oil for their soap factories is produced.[1]

Rather a fair development from the modest beginnings made by the twenty-eight weavers with apparently no prospects in life but the poorhouse! It illustrates what can be accomplished by an organization owned and controlled by workingmen.

[1] *The Carpenter.* It must be understood that the productive enterprises themselves, enumerated above, were not ordinarily conducted cooperatively. Thus the various factories were still usually operated on the wage-system.

In a similar manner Danish farmers have shown their power of self control by binding themselves to buy or sell to their own cooperatives only for a definite number of years in order to overcome the competition of capitalist rivals who for the first year might offer their goods at a lower rate than the cooperative in order to withdraw the men from their own undertakings, and later raise the prices at their own pleasure. In the meantime the farmers could fairly judge whether their cooperative was sound and safe.[2] Hence the great success of the Danish cooperative movement. Cooperative trading has proved successful in small countries and large, in Finland and Russia.

The question of cooperation has been sufficiently dealt with by the present writer in previous studies gathered together in "The World Problem." It is further developed here to show the possibility of applying the gild idea on a scale commensurate with our modern civilization. From the above illustration we can perhaps surmise what may yet be accomplished in the more difficult field of cooperative production as well as in the highly successful trading and banking enterprises of the workingmen. The latter are an education for labor. This the Catholic Bishops of the United States pointed out in their "Social Reconstruction," January, 1919, as also the American Federation of Labor in its own "Reconstruction Pro-

[2] *Central-Blatt and Social Justice,* Nov., 1918, p. 239.

gram." The following passages express the Federation's hearty endorsement of consumers' cooperative societies:

> There is an almost limitless field for the consumers in which to establish cooperative buying and selling, and in this *necessary* development the trade unionists should take an immediate and active part. . . . Participation in these cooperative agencies must of necessity prepare the mass of the people to participate more effectively in the solution of the industrial, commercial, social and political problems which continually arise.

With the American National Cooperative Convention, held at Springfield, Ill., September, 1918, the United States may be said to have definitely entered upon the new era of cooperation, as the last of the great world Powers to realize the importance of this movement. Best of all, it was a workingmen's convention, in which the speeches and discussions were by workingmen mainly. Its purpose was "the formation of a national cooperative wholesale house as a medium of supply to upward of 1,000 retail cooperatives in the United States." By this wider cooperation the various stores hoped more effectively to overcome the competition of wholesalers and jobbers. The comprehensive plans of the American workingmen were thus outlined at the time in the *Catholic Charities Review:*

> This will supply the special abilities of the best men of each group — men qualified for organizing being placed in one group, financial men in another, expert accountants in another, and shrewd buyers in others — who will give the seven groups

concerned the immediate benefit of their collective experience. The organization will finally resemble that of labor unions, which are formed into State federations, with national and international bodies above them. *Owned from below and managed democratically from below,* the warehouses supervised by the national organization will ultimately be erected in every important center of the country.[3]

In these now historic events we behold a true gild idea applied and carried out, as it should be, on a broad democratic basis. Shares were usually placed at the reasonable valuation of from $5 to $25, within the easy reach of every workingman. The more a family buys the more is the money returned to it in "dividends," but really as savings. It is a movement away from Socialism and back to the gilds with their sound tenet of wide private ownership and management by the workers in place of ownership and management by a communistic state. It is our first gild lesson.

The very beginnings of this movement remind us of the origin of the medieval craft gilds which in their early struggle effectively ended the capitalistic system of their day. It was the cradle exploit of a youthful Hercules whose labors were to be devoted to the good of mankind. "The cooperative movement, as we know it to-day," wrote Lewis S. Gannett in the *Survey,* "began with more or less spontaneity among small groups of weavers, mechanics, peasants, here and there, in Ireland, Russia, Denmark, France, England and Germany —

[3] March, 1919, p. 82.

almost everywhere except in America." [4] When it finally arose in America, it began in exactly the same manner. The Church at once welcomed this movement and took it into her arms. Her priests, like their predecessors a thousand years before, not merely encouraged it but gave to it their hearty support. Everywhere cooperative credit banks, in particular, were started for the rural populations by the parish priests. Even in distant India we find them successfully controlling or inspiring the cooperative trading and credit movement among the natives. A large and interesting volume could be written showing the active interest taken by the Catholic Church in the system of cooperation.

It is not a revolutionary movement, in the Socialist and Bolshevist sense, but a gradual and far more lasting transformation of society and of the entire economic order, without violence or injustice, provided the common good and the Gospel teachings are not lost to sight. "While the Socialists have been talking State ownership, and then, once having control of the states, have become afraid of the thing they preached," says the writer just quoted, "the cooperatives have, relatively unnoticed, been building up a form of industry which, more peacefully but no less certainly, challenges the pre-war irresponsible capitalist system of production." [5] To this system we

[4] "The Cooperative International," April 5, 1919.
[5] *Ibid.*

all are opposed and the Socialist vote has to a great extent implied no more than a protest against it. So far all can heartily agree. But men have failed to see the equally pernicious principles of the Socialist movement and the dangerous power given by it into the hands of men who are opposed alike to religion and to Christian morality, while their communistic dreams can only prove economically ruinous in the end. What men really desire is the solution offered by a Christian system of cooperation. Unfortunately cooperatives are constantly confused with Socialists by careless journalists, and even Bishop Ketteler and Pope Leo XIII, as well as the first Christians in the Apostolic Church, have been called Socialists. The word itself is perfectly innocent, and we might willingly claim it for ourselves, if its root-meaning were alone to be considered. But words often lose their primitive significance and gather about them a variety of associations in which they are clothed. Hence the wise insistence of Pope Pius X that the Christian popular movement be known as Christian Democracy and not as Social Democracy. There is an essential difference between the two. The former acknowledges all just rights of property, and seeks to bring about, not the abolition of private ownership in the means of production, but its widest distribution. The case has been clearly stated by a writer in the *Irish Theological Quarterly*. He asks:

Ought we try to remedy our present system by gradually working back to the Middle-Age conception of industry, in which practically every worker would be capitalist and laborer at the same time? Or ought private ownership to be abolished entirely, and an experiment be made with collective ownership? . . . The former alternative is favored not only by Catholics, who have definite ethical considerations to guide them, but also by a large body of non-Catholic social reformers. No one wants to revert to the industrial conditions of the Middle Ages. That would be obviously an absurd policy in view of the developments of science and machinery. What is aimed at is to bring our present industrial system into line with the more humane conception of industry, which obtained in those days. With this end in view social reformers have from time to time put forward various more or less tentative schemes, such as cooperation, copartnership and profit-sharing.

Cooperation would bind together in groups the small capitalists, that is the men who are at once the owners and workers of their business, and would thereby give them the economic advantages enjoyed by the large unit of capital. The system has been adopted with great success in the case of agriculture, and the consumers' cooperative stores. *Copartnership* is meant to apply chiefly to great industrial concerns, in which the development of machinery and the specialization of functions have rendered it necessary for great numbers of workers to cooperate in the manufacture of specific articles. The idea is to give all such workers a share in the capital and profits of the concern, so that the worker will no longer be a mere wage-earner, but will have a personal interest in the success of the business.

The second alternative, that of collective ownership, is proposed by Socialism and a number of other more or less extreme policies which have developed from Socialism. . . . The ideal of every collectivist policy is a social organization, in which there will be but one owner, the Community, and in which every citizen will be merely a wage-earner. The ideal of the Catholic social reformer on the other hand is an equitable distribution of wealth in a community in which every laborer will be owner, or at least part-owner of the business in which he works.[6]

[6] W. Moran, April, 1919.

The aim, then, of an ideal Christian gild system, applied to our modern economic developments, is to enable every man, so far as possible, to be an owner of productive property, not by a meaningless collectivism under a Socialist bureaucracy, but by a strictly private ownership, such as every individual gildsman enjoyed in the Middle Ages, and every apprentice and journeymen could reasonably hope to acquire in his own good time. In this way alone can society be stabilized and rendered immune from revolution and social unrest. Vastly significant is the fact that the only organizations that were able successfully to withstand all the forces of Bolshevism, were the Russian cooperative societies. They had been big enough to provision the great armies after the corrupt Czarist Government had ceased to function, says the New York *Evening Post,* and they were not to be shaken by even a Bolshevist revolution. So too the *Weekly Freeman* reports the remarks of the Rev. T. A. Finlay, S. J., at the annual meeting of the cooperative Irish Agricultural Organization Society:

> It was a remarkable thing that even in Russia, where revolution seemed to have broken into the wildest orgies, the Cooperative Society had held its own and seemed to be increasing daily in favor. Cooperative societies have been favored by all the Governments that had succeeded one another in that disturbed country.

The gild idea reached its most perfect modern

expression, so far attained, in the cooperative productive societies. It shall be the purpose of another chapter to outline the future of society were this ideal still more fully and more adequately realized.

Attention may here be called to the wide system of socialization, combined with private productive ownership, carried out by the farmers of North Dakota. Thus Bill No. 20 declared the purpose of the State of North Dakota to engage in the business of manufacturing and marketing farm products and to establish a warehouse, elevator and flour-mill system. To make State institutions independent of private capital, the State engaged in the banking business, without however closing the private banks. There was also a State hail-insurance department and a State home-building association established. All these laws were passed in January and February, 1919.

The principle itself of private productive ownership was not attacked, but the purpose rather was to safeguard it for the farmers by socializing certain institutions where cooperation had been employed in other countries. It all helps to make plain the trend of the times: collectivism or cooperation. We do not object to a limited State ownership, provided it does not exceed the demands of the public good; but we oppose the principles of Socialist collectivism and favor cooperation.

CHAPTER XXX

MODERN INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

A FEW years before the World War a strike was declared in one of the Italian glass-blowing industries. Unfortunately for the men, the employers' association had been most thoroughly organized, and the workers soon found themselves engaged in a losing fight. The funds from which to pay the strikers were rapidly running low and defeat was staring them in the face. At this moment, as Mr. Andrew E. Malone describes the event in the *Irish Monthly*,[1] a flanking movement was decided upon. Sufficient capital was collected by the workers and a cooperative society was formed that now gave employment to the men in their own plant. The experiment proved too successful to be discontinued with the termination of the strike. A period of sharp competition between the workmen's cooperative and the employers' plants naturally followed. It was a severe test for the workers' endurance and the financial soundness of their venture. But every difficulty was overcome, and by the end of the war, one-half of the entire output of bottles in Italy was produced in the four large

[1] June, 1919.

factories of the Federated Cooperative Glassworks, owned and managed by the workers.

The success of the Bottleblowers' Union was a lesson not lost upon the workers in other industries, and soon almost every department of production could number its enterprises cooperatively conducted by the men engaged in them. The movement had proved the ability of the workers to manage their own industries in open competition with capitalistic factories and workshops.

In the United States workmen's cooperative productive societies had sprung up periodically during almost the entire history of the labor movement. They were usually founded under conditions precisely similar to those under which the Italian union began its venture. A series of labor defeats was likely to be followed by a mushroom growth of cooperative productive societies, which either failed, or became capitalistic with success, or else disappeared so noiselessly that no further record can be found of them in contemporary documents. Yet these desultory pre-war efforts were no test of what could be accomplished under more favorable circumstances. Cooperative production in industry was more successful in France and England during this same period, but the movement rather declined than increased in these countries before the war. The immense productive enterprises of the great cooperative trading society of Great Britain were not necessarily cooperative,

but were ordinarily conducted on a mere wage-system, with the cooperative society as the employer.

A remarkable step was taken when in 1919 the trade union movement in Britain, with its 5,000,000 members, decided to join forces with the Union of British Cooperative Societies, numbering about 4,000,000 members, with the purpose of dominating production, consumption and distribution in Great Britain. Yet this too was not a society for cooperative production, but to control prices and guarantee a market for the cooperative organizations. The unions were to supply capital for increased production on the part of the cooperative societies, while all their banking business was to be undertaken by the Cooperative Wholesale Bank.

With the close of the World War the idea of cooperative production in industry had taken a new hold upon the mind and imagination of the workers of the entire world. Unfortunately the true historic lesson of the gild idea had not been brought home and communism and Socialism were widely confused with it. Hence the many aberrations of the new movement.

Long before this period Bishop Ketteler, in his plans for cooperative factories to be owned and managed by the workers, had made a modern Christian application of the medieval gilds to the large-scale machine production of our day. Naturally his ideals were never realized. The work-

ers of Germany were still financially and in many other ways too helpless to undertake this enterprise on their own responsibility, and Bishop Ketteler looked for the altruistic support of some of the great employers, who, he hoped, might be induced to give part of their accumulated fortunes to enable the workers to begin their cooperative ventures. The good Bishop was not the only one, as we know, vainly to entertain such hopes.

Passing next over the many unsuccessful efforts of the Utopian Socialists, we find a new impetus given to the gild idea in industry by M. Georges Sorel, the founder of the modern atheistic syndicalism, which began in the French non-Catholic *syndicats,* became the doctrine of the direct-actionists in England, and was copied by the I. W. W., or Industrial Workers of the World, in America. Direct action (*i.e.,* action without reliance upon political means), violence, sabotage, and the general strike "with folded arms," soon became inseparably connected with the word "Syndicalism."

This, however, was merely its destructive aspect. Constructively, syndicalism proposed to acquire for the workers the factories in which they were engaged, without any compensation to the owners. Since the idea of authority, both human and Divine, was scornfully rejected by its followers, any means that could bring about this consummation were held to be justifiable. While,

therefore, the medieval gild idea was in a measure caught by them in the ownership and management of industries by the workers, the means by which this was to be brought about and the methods by which it was to be carried out were distinctly false, morally unjustifiable and economically ruinous.

What has been said of syndicalism can be repeated, in its own way, of the soviets, as introduced by the Bolshevist Socialists of Russia. They shared in the worst vices of the proposed atheistical *syndicats*. They were equally regardless of the rights of property and the claims of authority, human and Divine. And yet they contained the germs of the gild idea, but without belief in God and obedience to His Ten Commandments and to the voice of His Church. Here precisely is the essential difference, the difference that implies failure on the one side and success on the other. The just rights of property were never disregarded by the gilds, as supported by the Church, nor were the interests of the various classes neglected. A classless society was never a gild ideal, but rather a society in which the laborer could achieve economic independence, could hope by industry and virtue to own his means of production and might joyfully perform his daily task without envy of other classes, who were made to respect his just rights as he religiously respected theirs. To paraphrase a line long consecrated to

the efforts of schoolboy oratory: "To be a gildsman was to be a king." But of this position the laborer was first to render himself worthy by training, experience and the record of a true religious life. Here is the great weakness of modern industrial democracy. It is a sad mistake to imagine that it can succeed without God or that men can be fit for responsibility without previous training and trial. Such were many of the immature attempts that led to failure.

Gild Socialism is another, and more direct modern application of the medieval gild conception. The mistake made here consists in yoking together two irreconcilable ideas that mutually contradict each other. The essence of the gild concept is private ownership attainable by the workers who prove their fitness. The essence of Socialism is, on the contrary, the denial of private ownership by the workers. A common form of Gild Socialism is that which would vest the ownership of the various industries in the State and give their management into the hands of the respective workers. Yet this idea, combining State ownership with labor control, if justly applied and limited to certain industries, is not of itself more objectionable than other forms of public ownership that are licit if the public interest demands them. The danger of abuse is obvious.

The originality of the Plumb plan, designed by Glen E. Plumb for the railroad brotherhoods,

was to be found in its directorate, which distinguished it from all other forms of Gild Socialism. While the latter commonly vests the ownership with the public and leaves the control and management to the workers, the new device admitted the public as one of three controlling factors. The board of directors was to consist of fifteen persons, five of whom were to be appointed by the President to represent the people, five to be elected by the operating officials and five to be chosen by the other employees. Rates were to be fixed, as before, by the Interstate Commerce Commission, but the determining of wages were ultimately to rest with the operating officials and employees, in as far as they constituted two-thirds of the directorate.

The surplus left after the payment of all expenses and charges was to be divided equally between the Government and the employees. But should the share accruing to the former ever exceed five per cent on the gross operating revenue, the entire government dividend was to be absorbed in a reduction of rates. Thus it was hoped gradually to reduce both traveling and freight charges for the public.

To prevent the employees from voting themselves higher wages whenever the government dividends would exceed five per cent, so that the wages might continually increase and the rates never fall, it was determined to give the operat-

ing officials twice the dividend paid to the other employees. An increase in dividends, it was held, would thus be preferable for them to an increase of salary. It is obvious how delicately adjusted the new mechanism was and how readily it might be thrown into disorder. The remaining sections of the plan dealt with the building of extensions and the establishment of a sinking fund, the money of which was eventually to be used to retire bonds now privately held, so that the roads might become the property of the people.

The ethical aspects of this plan are as complicated as its mechanism. If the property is owned by the people, we naturally ask, why should half the dividends be given to the workers who do not own it? Yet, on the other hand, it is not improper that labor be permitted a share in dividends to encourage production. But if the people are the employers of the railroad brotherhoods, why should the employees alone, in practice, determine the wages in which the people are equally interested? Why should not both have at least an equal vote? The common good should here be a main consideration. This again is a principle of true democracy. The workers themselves must always be the first to demand that the rights of the people are scrupulously respected. The application of such plans to all industry would destroy private ownership.

The true gild idea demands the persistence of

private productive property, but would have both its ownership and management vested, so far as may be justly and reasonably possible, in the workers themselves. This idea is to be carried out neither by violence, sabotage and general strikes, nor yet by confiscation, whether direct or in the form of taxation. It can be realized, in the first place, by the competitive efforts of the workers themselves, as has been shown in the case of the Italian Bottleblowers' Union, and might be illustrated by countless similar instances. Writing in the American *Journal of Sociology*, Victor S. Yarros says:

> It is our duty and our privilege to promote industrial democracy in all proper, expedient ways. Trade unions should turn their thoughts to the question of cooperative production and cooperative distribution. They are demanding justice, but they are not doing all they can to advance and establish industrial justice. They think too much of immediate questions and not enough about the future of industry and labor. Why should not American trade unions, or industrial unions, assume entrepreneur functions? Why should they not compete with private contractors? Why should they not start, on a modest scale, cooperative factories? One such factory, if successful, would be worth a thousand strikes from the point of view of ultimate economic justice and order. In primitive Russia there are thousands of *Artiels*, cooperative organizations of peasants and laborers. If American labor wants democratic industry, it should proceed to give society object lessons in democratic or cooperative industry. We may be sure that before long it will do this instead of contenting itself with negative methods. In the Old World cooperation has grown steadily and has been successful in many ways.[2]

[2] "The Coming Industrial Democracy," May, 1919.

But it is not necessary that cooperative enterprises should be undertaken by the workers exclusively. Hence the value of copartnership, defined as: "A system of industry under which the great mass of workers will not only have a direct interest in the profit of their work, but be *part owners* of the capital with which it is carried on." [3] Copartnership of necessity includes profit-sharing, but profit-sharing by itself alone is not copartnership. It is "an agreement, freely entered into, by which the employee receives a share, *fixed in advance,* of the profits." [4] Copartnership may often be the most feasible method of cooperation where larger sums of capital are required than the workingmen themselves can furnish from their own resources. It therefore invites outside shareholders to provide a portion, greater or smaller, of the capital needed. Labor then shares, according to its own contribution, both in the profits and the control of the business. This plan was evolved by workingmen themselves in England and was put into successful operation on the initiative of employers as well as of labor.

In the typical English labor copartnership society, as described by Aneurin Williams in 1913, each shareholder was given a single vote, irrespective of his or her amount of share capital. The

[3] Aneurin Williams, "Co-partnership and Pofit-Sharing," p. 10.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 13.

latter might never exceed £200 for any one individual. The committee on management was democratically elected by the shareholders, and every class of the membership was to be represented, including the customers, who were the co-operative societies and as such held shares. The division of profits, after wages and expenses have been paid, is thus explained:

> The first charge upon the net profit, after providing for depreciation, reserve, etc., is usually a dividend of five per cent on the shares. The profit remaining after that is divided as a dividend to the workers on wages, a dividend to the customers on the amount of their purchases, a small additional dividend on shares, certain payments to educational and provident funds, and so on. Thus shares may in a prosperous society get a total return of six or even seven per cent, labor a dividend of 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* (in pre-war values) on wages, and customers a rebate of perhaps 8*d.* in the pound on their purchases. The figures, of course, vary greatly. In all the more modern societies the worker cannot withdraw his dividend on wages in cash, until he has accumulated a certain sum in the shares of the society. Up to that sum it is capitalized.[5]

Employers themselves have often taken a leading part in the development of copartnership as well as of profit-sharing schemes. Among the first notable methods for the partitioning of dividends between capital and labor in the United States, was the so-called Ryan-Callahan plan of "distributive justice." The following is a description of it as it was operative in 1917, when a

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

bonus equal to fifty-six per cent on their wages fell to the share of the employees:

> First, the entire profits of the business for the year are reckoned, lump sum. Then, they are cut into two equal parts. One part goes to capital, the other to labor. The share to capital is distributed in proportion to the capital actually invested, paper stock not being considered. Capital gets no other share in the profits of the business. Thus capital and labor share equally in all profits, on the principle that they are equally indispensable factors of production. Labor's share is distributed in this way: As the Callahan plant is a manufacturing concern, there are three distinct classes of workers employed, each alike indispensable, namely, factory employees, salesmen, and office force. Each of these classes gets one-third of labor's share and each member of a class receives the proportion that his wage or salary bears to that third. This completes the plan.

As an educational feature, the dividends were placed at a good rate of interest for the workers. The capital thus formed was paid out to them only in case they desired it for the building of a home or some similar worthy purpose, or if they left their employment. This course was followed in as far as the dividends given out the first year in a lump sum had quickly disappeared, without improving the condition of the workers.

Even where capital is less willing to make concessions it recognizes the falsity of the assumption that what is of advantage to the laborer must be of advantage to the employer. The reply given by Robert Owen to the factory owner who said to him, "If my men liked, they could save me £10,000 a year by better work and the avoid-

ance of waste," has become classical: "Then why don't you pay them £5,000 a year to do it?" As John Leitch has expressed the same idea: "Old-fashioned owners expect people to work *for* them. *Working for* spells competition; *working with* is cooperation." To bring men to work with him is the problem to be solved by the modern business man.

The following is a characteristic type of the copartnership plan as introduced in England by many of the employers themselves during the pre-war period.

> Every regular worker has a share of profit credited to him in proportion to the economy of production, and to the amount of his wages. By the accumulation and investment of this profit he becomes a shareholder, and, at the shareholders' meetings, he has a vote in proportion to his capital; and he helps to elect the Directors. Thus copartnership gives the share in responsibility and control which normally goes with shareholding. I do not mean by that a right to interfere in the details of the management, any more than an ordinary stockholder has a right to do so in a joint stock company. I mean a voice in settling the general policy of the business, and in electing the Directors who are to carry out that policy.

But an even broader vision was given by the Great War, and employers were in many instances of their own accord prepared to welcome the participation of labor also "in the details of the management" on its industrial side. So the world was daily progressing towards new concepts of a new order of democratic industry. A first step towards this was the shop-committee system.

In " Man to Man " John Leitch outlines a plan modeled by him after the Government of the United States. It consists of a House of Representatives, elected by the employees; a Senate constituted of foremen and department managers; and a Cabinet, or executive council, with the president of the company as the president of the cabinet. In this the discussions of the two Houses are taken up and with it the ultimate approval of all measures pertaining to the conduct of the factory must therefore rest after having passed the House and Senate. The complaints and grievances of the men, their disputes over rates or wages are to be presented to their representatives in the House, there to be fairly discussed and decided at the meeting. These representatives are to be elected by departments, one for each twenty-five employees. Small departments combine with each other. Such at least was the first practical application made. The following illustration of this plan, as it was operative during the years 1918 and 1919 in the Demuth Company, the largest manufacturers of pipes and smokers' articles in the world, will be of interest:

In the Demuth plan the employee's profit from the plan is dependent upon his effective interest in it and in the prosperity of the plant, not upon his "bargaining power." His dividends, which are distinct from his wages, increase and decrease with the quantity and quality of output, individual and group efficiency, and market conditions. In this plant, therefore, the em-

ployee's representatives have not approached the question of hours dogmatically, but have experimented with various working schedules and adjusted them to output and market conditions, with a view to the greatest profit to the company as a whole. In a similar scientific spirit they keep a close eye on labor turnover, have made a plant schedule of holidays for a great variety of races, and have set up their own Americanization classes. The plan was not introduced because of labor troubles, and there have never been any at this plant.[6]

Yet in spite of this roseate picture a combined strike and lock-out resulted a few months after these lines were written. For two reasons the American Federation of Labor objected to all such plans of "Industrial Democracy," however benevolently intended and conducted. The first was that they still leave the final decision with the employer; and the second, that they overlook the labor unions and substitute an employer's organization in their stead. These are sound objections. There can be no doubt that labor must ultimately find its safety in its own organization, since it cannot make itself dependent upon the mere benevolence of employers.

The main problem for labor unions is to keep just and reasonable in their demands. It will thus be possible, through them, to cooperate towards industrial democracy along the lines of the already existing order. The initiative to many such movements in the United States was given

[6] *The Review*, June 21, 1919.

by the War Labor Board whose general principles in the shops conducted by it were:

> That men and management should together and by common consent work out a shop-committee system; that this system should be adapted to the peculiar local needs of the factory or plant; that *due proportional representation* should be given to every group which, upon investigation, appears to be entitled to it.[7]

In the same way the Whitley Report, adopted by the British Government, sought to apply the principle of representative government to the whole field of industry, calling for joint industrial councils, national, district and "works," in which labor and capital were to be equally represented, while the presidency of the various councils was to be assigned to impartial officers. It is to be observed also that both workers and employers are represented by their unions or associations. Even copartnership plans themselves cannot dispense with the need of the trade unions, since the danger will always remain that wages may be reduced in favor of dividends. Thus the Labor Co-Partnership Association of London, after the great railway strike of September, 1911, wisely issued the following pronouncement:

> Copartnership assumes a standard wage before there can be any talk of profit to divide. A standard wage assumes organization to maintain it and to raise it. It assumes reasonable forms of trade unionism, collective bargaining, the meeting of capital and labor.[8]

[7] *The Survey*, June 7, 1919.
[8] Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

The democratization of industry does not imply the disappearance of all previous economic institutions. Cooperative and copartnership arrangements, public ownership, individually conducted enterprises and private corporations will continue side by side, as shall be demanded for the common good. But labor's increasing share in ownership and responsibility will be the surest safeguard of lasting industrial peace. On the other hand the legal restrictions placed upon the acquisition of excessive fortunes through just methods of graded taxation, whose purpose is not confiscation, but the public good, will greatly reduce the former inequalities, and the envy and discontent to which they gave birth. Bidding us look with him into the future a recent writer asks:

> Does it please you to contemplate a future in which one boy or girl out of ten may "rise" to a condition of independence and dignity, while the other nine must remain dependent for their living upon the hiring and firing process, with no interest in the work by which they live except such as can be enclosed in the pay-envelope? Or would you rather contemplate a future in which the range of jobs that have been emancipated from the status of wage-slavery [i. e., the exclusive dependence upon wages and denial of all partnership in responsibility] is coextensive with the field of industry? That is the issue reduced to its essentials.[9]

Finally it is necessary that the burden of eco-

[9] *The New Republic,* June 7, 1919.

nomic betterment of the worker, where this is reasonably called for, or the just taxation of incomes, be not placed upon the consumer, so that every increase in wages or taxation may not be accompanied by a rise in prices. This can be brought about, on the one hand, by the various methods which enable the worker to share in the profit and responsibility of the business and hence increase his productivity, and on the other by keeping profits and taxation within reasonable limits. The worker, too, must act upon conscientious motives, be satisfied with wages that the industry can bear without burdening the consumer, and give his fair energies through a period of time that is not abnormally shortened. These are principles the gildsmen held sacred, and that must be revived again in modern industry, if it is ever to be truly democratized. The home, too, must be kept inviolate, as well as the mother's place in it with her little ones. This will reduce the problem of unemployment, and make possible adequate wages, based on increased productivity, such as should certainly result from real industrial cooperation.

The large corporations themselves were in a manner democratized long ago by the thousands, and even tens of thousands, of small investors who brought together into them their joint savings. But their management did not so readily change its autocratic nature. The small shareholder was to be satisfied with his dividend check and blindly

vote "proxies." To protect him, therefore, from gambling, frenzied finance and outright spoliation, as Victor S. Yarros suggests, "publicity, democratic control, directorates of a new type, will be found increasingly necessary." If the small investor can not protect himself, the State must do so; for as the writer correctly says, the only mean between reactionary Bourbonism and Bolshevism is democratic industry. The Church had discovered this centuries ago and consistently acted upon it.

The emphasis throughout this chapter has been placed upon self-help. It is the Socialistic fallacy to depend entirely upon the State, by surrendering land and industry to it, and thus establishing a new and worse autocracy in place of the old. It is on the other hand the mistake of many more judicious minds, who rightly look instead for a wider distribution of productive property among the workers themselves, to seek to attain this end by legislative measures almost exclusively. The lesson of the gilds can here again be of service. They accomplished their success through perfect cooperation with the municipal or State government, seeking first and foremost the common good.

It is well that there should be State regulation protecting the small investor and discriminating in his favor, within all just limits. It is well that the burden of taxation should bear increasingly upon those who accumulate shares in their own in-

dividual hands, whether from one or from many corporations. It is well that there should be thus created the widest just distribution of voting stock among the people. It is well, too, that the manipulations of speculators should forever be made impossible by a relentless publicity and by adequate legal action. But the first step towards a true democratic industry is self-help on the part of labor and of the many sincere employers who are eager to promote the new democratic industry that alone can give social stability — provided always that the principles of the Church are not forgotten, on which every sound social order must be based.

A CATHOLIC SOCIAL PLATFORM

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PREAMBLE

1. True modern democracy first arose beneath the fostering care of the Church, derived its principles from the great Catholic thinkers of the Middle Ages, found its expression in many of the early Catholic city-democracies, was actively maintained in its rights of self-government during the wars of the twelfth century by Pope Alexander III, has been continuously exemplified since the thirteenth century in the Catholic cantons of Switzerland, and was most brilliantly defended in the theological schools of the seventeenth century. The Reformation doctrine of the Divine right of kings was ever strenuously opposed by the Church. (*D. I.*, XXVI.) [1]

2. All true democracy, as an embodiment of the brotherhood of man, must be based on the fundamental doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. (*D. I.*, V.)

3. Its aim is not the abolition of classes, from

[1] At the end of the various clauses, "*W. P.*" stands for "The World Problem" (P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York, and R. & T. Washbourne, London), while the numerals following indicate the respective chapters. "*D. I.*" similarly refers to "Democratic Industry" (same publishers).

which universal happiness is vainly expected by some to flow. It freely acknowledges "the diversity of gifts that man receives, with the consequent inevitable difference in position, learning, acquirements and possessions which have ever characterized, and must always characterize the members of the human race." (Cardinal Bourne.)

4. The perfect social ideal is found only in the Christian cooperation of all classes and of all individuals, as members of one social body, under the governance of lawfully appointed authority, whose power, however conferred by the people, is ultimately derived from God. (*W. P.*, XXV.)

5. Democracy in education took its beginning in the great system of public schools created by the Church (Third and Fourth Lateran Councils, 1179 and 1215) and in the vast medieval universities fostered by her, with their gilds of masters and scholars. (*D. I.*, XXIII.)

6. With the "Great Pillage," the suppression of monasteries and the confiscation of gild funds devoted to religion and charity, pauperism arose for the first time. The one power that by its very teaching and influence, as exemplified in the gilds at their perfection, could have preserved the working classes from the degradation to which they were subjected, was set aside. Hence the "rapacious usury" that followed, so that, as Pope Leo XIII described the conditions existing in his

own day: "A small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than slavery itself." (*R. N.*[2]) (*D. I.*, XXVII.)

7. The chief aim of Christian social endeavor, or "Christian Democracy," is, in the words of the same Pontiff: "To make the condition of those who toil more tolerable; to enable them to obtain, little by little, those means by which they may provide for the future; to help them to practice in public and in private the duties which morality and religion inculcate; to aid them to feel that they are not animals but men, not heathens but Christians, and so to enable them to strive more zealously and eagerly for the one thing which is necessary: the ultimate good for which we are all born into this world." (*R. N.*) *What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul.* (Matt. xvi: 26.) (*W. P.*, XXV; *D. I.*, XXVIII.)

FALSE SOCIAL SYSTEMS

8. Socialism is no solution for the evils which have followed the Reformation. Far from satisfying the legitimate desire of the worker for a personal share in productive ownership, it would ultimately deprive all alike of such ownership, subjecting the laborer hopelessly to a bureaucratic

[2] "*Rerum Novarum*," the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, "On the Condition of the Working Classes," issued in 1891.

control, both tyrannical and inefficient. Socialism is more or less complete in proportion as it aims at this abolition of private productive ownership. (*W. P.*, III; *D. I.*, IV.)

9. Individualistic capitalism, understood as a system in which the means of production are in the hands of a few men of wealth, inspired merely with a passion for the utmost gain and unrestrained by due legal restrictions, is equally pernicious. (*W. P.*, IV, XXI.)

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY

10. The Church of Christ has not been founded to teach any particular system of sociology or economics. She condemns whatever is morally false in the existing practices or theories and commends whatever form of social order, based upon the natural law and the Gospel, wisely answers the needs of any given period. She is not for any single generation but for all time, while economic conditions are fluctuating perpetually. (*W. P.*, XVII; *D. I.*, V–VIII, etc.)

11. Yet it is the duty of Christians, particularly at the present moment, not to overlook the social dangers that imperil civilization; and it is possible for them to build up on her principles, teachings and traditions a true system of democratic industry which shall answer all the needs of their day. On no other foundation can a sound social order be erected.

12. Equally opposed to the unnatural abolition of private productive ownership under Socialism, and to its restriction to a few men of wealth under capitalism, the true social system advocates instead the widest diffusion of the possession of productive as well as of private property, that as many as possible of the workers can hope, by just means, to become sharers in it. And this personally, and not merely in the name of a communistic commonwealth. (*W. P.*, XVIII; *D. I.*, I, XIX, etc.)

13. Such possession will satisfy the aspirations of men, lift them above the position of wage-earners only, and help to their full and harmonious development, insuring the stability of the new social order. (*D. I.*, XXIX, XXX.)

14. Such was the consummation most closely attained when Catholic gildhood was in its prime and the influence of the Church effective; when the apprentice might hope, by industry, skill and virtue, to become a master; when social discontent was unknown and pauperism undreamed of; when each lived for all and all for each. Such is the Catholic ideal. (*D. I.*, XVIII-XXII, XXV.)

DEMOCRATIC INDUSTRY

15. The old organizations cannot be restored as they were. But it is possible, in the words of Pius X: "To adapt them to the new situation created by the material evolution of contemporary

society in the same Christian spirit which of old inspired them." (*D. I.*, XXVIII.)

16. Such, in a material way, are the cooperative trade, credit and agricultural societies intended for self-help and to eliminate a wasteful system of distribution. Such are the attempts at cooperative production, where the entire enterprise is owned by the workers who alone receive both wage and profit, and where each worker is personal owner of shares and participates, directly or indirectly, in the management. (*W. P.*, XIX, XX; *D. I.*, XXIX, XXX.)

17. Such, too, though less completely, are the various plans in which the workers own a considerable part of the voting stock. And such in fine, to a greater or less degree, are all copartnership arrangements by which the workers share in the corporate stock and reasonably participate in the industrial management: the regulation, through their shop gilds, of hours, wages, discipline, processes of production, etc. (*W. P.*, XIX; *D. I.*, XVIII.)

18. Since every business is constituted of money-capital and labor-capital, it is unreasonable that the former alone, as under capitalism, should have the entire power of control and the latter be subjected to a state of complete dependence. Men are more than money, and persons more precious than machinery. (*D. I.*, XVIII, etc.)

19. But for the lasting success of any economic

plans, religion is essential. The gilds were able to maintain their spirit of democratic industry in proportion only to their religious zeal. With this they waxed or waned. Without certain disaster, religion can never be dissociated from economics. (*D. I.*, XIV, XXVII.)

THE PUBLIC GOOD

20. While keeping clearly in sight this vision of the true city, which is to be constructed after no merely speculative model, we must not forget the intermediate measures that are not, however, to be confounded with the ultimate goal.

21. Adequate government regulation should prevent the accumulation of excessive gains in the hands of a few, the monopolistic control of commodities, and the abuses that may arise in such public service monopolies as are under private operation. (*D. I.*, XII.)

22. Monopolies or combines are guilty of injustice when in the articles of common use they exceed the highest prices, that would obtain in the market were it freely open to competition, presuming in each instance the previous payment of a just wage. They may offend against charity by not lowering this price as well when notable hardship is inflicted upon the poor. All " cornering " must be prevented absolutely and all unfair business methods. (*W. P.*, V, VI.)

23. State ownership should not be introduced

where State control suffices. The farther an industry is removed from a public service utility or a natural monopoly, the greater the presumption in favor of private ownership, cooperative or otherwise. (*W. P.*, XVIII.)

24. Since it is the duty of the State to see that natural resources are turned to good account for the support and welfare of all the people, "the State or municipality should acquire, always for compensation, those agencies of production, and those agencies only, in which the public interest demands that public property rather than private ownership should exist." (Irish Bishops, 1914.) (*W. P.*, III, XXI.)

25. Unjust restrictions should not be placed on those, who to the general benefit are acquiring legitimate prosperity under private enterprise. (*W. P.*, XVIII.)

26. Taxation should bear most upon those who are able to contribute most to the common good, but should not be made a means of confiscation. Special protection should be given to the small share-holder and a wider diffusion of shares made possible, within the limits of justice. The words of Pope Leo XIII must be borne in mind: "The right to possess private property is derived from nature, not from man; and the State has the right to control its use in the interest of the public good, but by no means to absorb it altogether. The State would therefore be unjust and cruel if under

the name of taxation it were to deprive the private owner of more than is fitting." (*R. N.*) (*W. P.*, XXI.)

LABOR MEASURES

27. Until a larger social justice reigns, minimum wage laws must enable every male worker to support a family in Christian decency. Every adult woman worker must be enabled to live respectably by her earnings alone. Enough should gradually be paid to make it possible for every worker to provide for the future out of his or her own wages, without need of State insurance. In this way only can industry be said to be properly supporting those engaged in it. (*W. P.*, IX.)

28. As exceptional business enterprise and efficiency, directed towards the greater common good, is entitled to an exceptional reward, so labor also should be remunerated in proportion to its contribution to industry.

29. By workers we understand all engaged in mental as well as in manual occupations, in the service of distribution or production, from manager to messenger, although the need of State protection for the former may be insignificant.

30. As the State must come to the aid of the consumer in as far as the general welfare requires, so too it must safeguard labor's rights: religious, moral, physical and economic. In like manner the rights of every class must be duly protected

by it to whatever extent the common good demands. (*W. P.*, VIII.)

31. The duty of labor is to give a fair day's work, as the duty of the employer is to provide a fair wage and proper working conditions, from a religious and moral, as well as from a material and sanitary point of view. (*W. P.*, X.)

32. Strikes are permitted for a grave and just cause, when there is a hope of success and no other satisfactory solution can be found, when justice and charity are preserved, and the rights of the public duly respected. Conciliation, arbitration and trade agreements are the natural means to be suggested in their stead. Hence the utility of public boards for this purpose. As in the strike, so in the lock-out, a serious and just cause is required, and the rights of the workers and of the public must be respected. Charity is far more readily violated in the lock-out than in the strike, because of the greater suffering likely to be inflicted on the laborer deprived of his work than on the employer. (*W. P.*, XI.)

33. Justification of the sympathetic strike will rarely be found, while the presumption is overwhelmingly against the general sympathetic strike. (*W. P.*, XII.) Blacklists on the part of employers that permanently exclude from his trade a worker displeasing to them, who honestly seeks employment, are opposed to the first principles of justice.

34. The problem of unemployment should be met by a permanent national employment service, acting with the cooperation of municipal and private bureaus. Methods of preventing or meeting the crisis of unemployment should be carefully studied. Governments have a serious duty to obviate this evil, and provide for the unemployed according to their necessity. (*W. P.*, XIII, XIV.)

35. Hours of labor should be neither unreasonably long nor unreasonably short. Sunday labor should be prohibited, except in cases of real necessity, such as is too often merely presumed to exist. (*W. P.*, VIII; *D. I.*, XIX, XX.)

36. Until labor can properly provide for itself, the State should interest itself in housing conditions, particularly where there is danger to morals and religion as well as to the physical well-being of the worker and of his family. Health inspection in the schools and municipal clinics for the poor are recommended. (*W. P.*, II.)

37. Vocational training is desirable, without neglecting the cultural and religious education of our children. "A healthy democracy cannot tolerate a purely industrial or trade education for any class of its citizens." Further, "the opportunities of the system should be extended to all qualified private schools on exactly the same basis as to the public schools. We want neither class divisions

in education nor a State monopoly of education." (American Bishops.) (*D. I.*, XXI.)

38. So long as proper wages are not accorded, social insurance is to be favored to whatever extent may be necessary to safeguard the laborer in sickness, accident, invalidity and old age. It must be clearly understood, however, that there is question of a temporary substitute only for an adequate wage, which will enable the worker to carry his own insurance and not to be a mere ward of the State. The dignity of labor must be protected from communistic paternalism as well as from capitalistic abuses. (*W. P.*, XVII; *D. I.*, IV.)

39. An intelligent penal system will make it possible for dependents to live upon the earnings of the imprisoned wage-earner. It may also enable the prisoner to lay aside something for future rehabilitation. (*W. P.*, XVII.)

40. The right of labor organization is no longer in question and never should have been. The worker should see that Christian principles are maintained within his union and not permit it, through his own carelessness, to be made the helpless tool of extremists. (*W. P.*, XVI; *D. I.*, III.)

41. It is therefore of the highest importance that Christian social education through organization and literature, be extended to every single one of our own labor unionists. Hence also the imperative need of Christian schools of sociology for

the training of Christian social leaders. (*W. P.*, XVI, XXV.)

WOMAN LABOR

42. Exploitation of woman and child labor is to be strictly abolished, as well as every other form of sweating. (*W. P.*, XXII, XXIII, XXIV.)

43. While woman in industry is to receive a minimum wage sufficient for her own support, it is reasonable that she should moreover be paid according to her service. This will imply an equal wage with man for work equal in quantity and quality, when engaged at the same task with him. (*W. P.*, XXIII.)

44. If wife and mother are no longer driven to the factory, owing to the husband's inadequate wage, and child labor is ended, there will be work for the fathers of families as well as for all men and women who must provide their own support. So too a widowed mother's pension, to be paid as far as necessary, will keep both mother and children in the home. (*W. P.*, XVII.)

45. "Woman," says Leo XIII, "is by nature fitted for home-work, and it is this which is best adapted to her modesty and to promote the good up-bringing of children and the well-being of the family." (*R. N.*) "The proportion of women in industry ought to be kept within the smallest practical limits." (American Bishops.) They should not be placed at occupations unfit, or

morally and physically dangerous; it is the duty of the State to ensure this right for them and to secure for them reasonable hours, sanitary conditions, abolition of night work, and the removal of all circumstances injurious to sex and maternity. (*W. P.*, XXIV.)

FARM LABOR

46. Every just encouragement is to be given to promote farm labor and the development of a large class of small farm owners. (*W. P.*, XV; *D. I.*, VIII.)

47. Cooperative buying, selling and credit associations, and cooperative production are here to be particularly recommended as thoroughly approved by experience. All abuses in transportation, working equal hardship on the producer and consumer, must be removed, and produce brought to the market with the least intervention of middlemen. (*W. P.*, XIX, XX, VII; *D. I.*, XIII.)

48. Government loans should be made, where needed, to enable men to settle upon the land, either as owners or as tenants with long-time leases. "It is essential that both the work of preparation and the subsequent settlement of the land should be effected by groups or colonies, not by men living independently of one another and in depressing isolation." (American Bishops.) Attention should be given in particular to the facilities of regularly fulfilling religious duties.

The problem of the farm laborer, too, is to be carefully studied. (*W. P.*, XV.)

49. The principle of land nationalization is to be strongly condemned as unnatural, economically ruinous and undemocratic. The rights of the tiller to his soil must be held sacred. Keeping inviolate all just property rights, the laborer should "be encouraged to look forward to obtaining a share in the land." (Leo XIII, *R. N.*) (*W. P.*, XVIII.)

CAUSES OF SOCIAL DISASTER

50. The roots of the social problem penetrate deep. The evils of impurity, birth control and divorce corrupt the individual, the home and society. With these are associated the inordinate craving after pleasure, the shirking of duty, and the wide-spread wastefulness and excess of all classes, together with a desire for the utmost gain, regardless of the common good. (*W. P.*, II, XI; *D. I.*, IX.)

51. These evils, which naturally flow from a rejection of religion, are most intimately connected with all our economic and social disorders, whose last cause is godlessness. (*W. P.*, XIV.)

52. Finally, there is the doctrine that would make of the State a fetish to which all human rights, whether of the family or of the individual, are to be relentlessly sacrificed. Hence follow State autocracy, bureaucracy, Socialism and all the

endless forms of State paternalism that threaten to submerge democracy. (*D. I.*, I, IV, XXVI, XXIX, etc.)

FIRST PRINCIPLES

53. The sacredness of all human life must be recognized, and the duty of conforming it to the Will of God.

54. The purity of family life must be restored, and the family, as the unit of society, must bravely assume its duties and responsibilities in a true Christian spirit. The future belongs to those who safeguard the home.

55. The pagan theory that the individual exists for the State and not the State for the individual, must be absolutely rejected.

56. Secularization of educ̣ation must be opposed as the greatest danger to modern society, together with all over-centralization and undue State interference, as tending to establish the most pernicious of all autocracies. To the parent alone, and not to the State, belongs, of itself and directly, the responsibility for the upbringing of the child.

57. The safe-guarding of the just rights of Christianity, on which the future of civilization depends, is not possible without the development of a strong, alert, loyal and intelligent Christian press. The support and furtherance of this is a first duty. The law, on the other hand, should be

made to prevent the publication of untrue statements and reports, and protect from slander all, whether individually or collectively.

58. The success of Christian Democracy, which is purely social and not political, will finally depend upon the utmost organization and concentration of effort. Nor should Catholics neglect the full use of their political rights in the measure in which they are granted to every citizen, since by reason of their Divine Faith they "may prove themselves capable, as much as, and even more than others, of cooperating in the material and civil well-being of the people, thus acquiring that authority and respect which may make it even possible for them to defend and promote a higher good, namely, that of the soul." (Pius X. "Christian Social Action.")

CONCLUSION

59. Besides the rules of social justice, the laws of Christian charity should bind together employer and employees, and all classes and ranks, into one Christian brotherhood. To accomplish this in its perfection, nothing can be of greater importance than that all should heed again the voice of that Mother from whom the nations have wandered, who begot them in the unity of a great Christendom in the ages of Catholic Faith. Her teachings are the same now as they were in the days of the Apostles, and as they will remain to the

end of time, yet always perfectly adapted to every changing period of history. For the promise of Christ to her can never be made void: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxviii: 20.) (*W. P.*, XXV.)

60. Hence she alone can never possibly mislead mankind, and there can be no surer hope for true and lasting reconstruction than the return of all to her, the one and only apostolic Church, the Church of our fathers.

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